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The Geographical Foundations of State Legislative Conflict, 1993-2012

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The Geographical Foundations of State Legislative Conflict, 1993-2012

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The Geographical Foundations of State Legislative Conflict, 1993-2012

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Over the past twenty years, the geographical bases of state legislative parties have shifted substantially. In statehouses across the country, legislators from densely-populated districts with large racial minority populations have become a larger presence inside Democratic caucuses while legislators from exurban and sparsely-populated districts have become a larger presence inside Republican caucuses. These changes have had important consequences for roll-call voting and policy outcomes inside legislatures, as new coalitional configurations formed by the intersection of party and geography have replaced older ones. In this dissertation, I examine the causes and consequences of these changes in a new way, one that more closely approximates a legislator's relationship to her "geographical constituency" (to use Richard Fenno's famous term). Unlike traditional studies of the social origins of legislative conflict, which have focused on how the constituency bases of legislative parties can be distinguished by reference to a small set of district-level demographic variables examined independently of each other, my approach views district demographic variables as the empirical manifestations of a wide variety of distinct, if latent, geographical contexts.

My efforts to model the geographical constituency are centered upon a technique called Latent Profile Analysis (LPA), which estimates a latent categorical variable (in this case, legislative district categories indicative of distinct socioeconomic contexts) that

captures covariation among a set of observed continuous variables (in this case, district-level demographic and geographical variables). The LPA analysis, which incorporates over 3,500 districts from seventeen chambers in the 1990s and 2000s, yields a nine-fold district categorization scheme that serves as the basis for subsequent inquiries of the dissertation. These inquiries examine how demographic and electoral change have interacted to influence trends in partisan representation of the district categories, how party and district category come together to explain patterns of roll-call ideology among state legislators, and how social cleavages over public policy within state electorates are translated into particular voting alignments involving the district categories. The dissertation speaks to a large literature in political science on the constituency-legislator relationship, as well to current debates about geographical sorting, legislative polarization, and the role of policy content in shaping voting coalitions.

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Chapter One: Introduction

On the evening of November 2, 2010, Republicans in Alabama rejoiced upon achieving a longstanding goal, the last and most elusive element of the GOP's ascent to majority status in the Yellowhammer State – control of the Alabama Legislature. While Republicans had begun to make inroads in Alabama politics during the 1950s and 1960s, their gains had for several decades been almost entirely restricted to federal elections. As far as Alabama state government was concerned, the Republican Party remained a non-factor all the way until the early 1990s, when a Republican won the Alabama governorship and the party finally succeeded in establishing a durable foothold in both state legislative houses. Over the course of the next two decades, Republicans would continue to make incremental gains in state legislative elections, such that by 2007 Republican caucuses in the Legislature constituted genuinely consequential forces. Then, on the heels of the 2010 Republican landslide that swept the country, the dam finally burst and Republicans took control of the Alabama Legislature for the first time since 1874.

Scanning the political environment that emerged after the 2010 elections, longtime observers of Alabama politics noticed an interesting pattern: the new political landscape in the state capitol of Montgomery was not just one in which the sizes of the legislative party caucuses were reversed from what they had been just two decades earlier. It was also one in which the geographical bases of the state legislative parties had almost completely shifted. In the early 1990s, the Democratic Caucus in the Alabama House of Representatives was composed of legislators from a diverse array of

geographies, including the central cities and suburbs of Birmingham and Mobile, rural counties in northern Alabama and along the state's coastal plain, and the "Black Belt" stretching across the south-central part of the state. For their part, Republicans had managed to establish an enclave for themselves in a ring of districts along the outer edges of the Birmingham area, but apart from a few additional districts scattered in isolated corners of the state, their caucus did not include members from elsewhere. By 2011, however, it was the Democratic caucus whose geographical provenance had been reduced to a fairly small set of enclaves. Outside the central cores of the state's large cities and the Black Belt, the vast majority of state house districts were now represented by Republicans.

The story of the Republican Party's path to control of the Alabama Legislature is important in many ways, most obviously as an example of how the Republican realignment of the American South finally manifested itself within state governments after decades of strong resistance from Democratic elites. However, a much less obvious element of interest in the story is its similarity to the circumstances surrounding the Republican ascent to majority control of many non-Southern state legislatures in the 2000s. Consider the case of Minnesota, a state about as un-Southern (in both a geographical as well as a cultural sense) as one can get. As in Alabama, Republicans in Minnesota swept into control of both houses of their state's legislature in 2010 after an exile that had lasted generations.[1] As in Alabama, the Republican triumph in state legislative elections in Minnesota was based in large part on the success of GOP

[1] Though, in the case of Minnesota, the exile had lasted 42 years as opposed to 136 in Alabama.

candidates in rural but historically Democratic parts of the state (most notably, the Iron Range district in northern Minnesota). And as in Alabama, the Republican takeover of the state legislature in Minnesota in 2010 paved the way for a highly partisan and acrimonious legislative session the following year.

To be sure, the stories behind the Republican takeovers of the Alabama Legislature and the Minnesota Legislature in 2010 are far from identical. Substantial differences between the two cases exist in terms of the trend in the composition of the legislatures in the lead-up to the 2010 elections as well as in the prospects for the future of party conflict in each state in upcoming decades. Nonetheless, a bird's eye view of recent developments in the two states does reveal striking similarities in the recent changes in party conflict that their legislatures have undergone. These similarities are indicative of a broader pattern, the central elements of which can be seen in developments occurring in states throughout the country. Over the past twenty years, the partisan orientations of state legislative bodies have changed substantially, generally (though not always) to the benefit of Republicans. These changes have tended to occur in tandem with a long-term shift in the geographical bases of state legislative party caucuses. They have also generally been followed by a marked change in the nature of political conflict inside statehouses, as new coalitional configurations formed by the intersection of party and geography have replaced older ones.

This dissertation seeks to shed light on the developments highlighted in the above paragraphs. More specifically, it attempts to answer the following general questions: first, how did the geographical bases of state legislative parties change over the course of the

last decade of the 1900s and the first decade of the 2000s? Second, what socioeconomic and political factors explain these changes? Third, what have these changes meant for the coalitional dynamics at work inside state legislative chambers? And finally, what have they meant for the policymaking processes in these chambers? In answering each of these questions, I adopt a new approach to understanding the link between the social constituencies underpinning political parties and the nature of conflict inside legislative bodies. Studies examining the social foundations of legislative conflict have traditionally focused on how the constituency bases of legislative parties can be distinguished by reference to a small set of district-level demographic variables. In this study, I propose an alternative way of analyzing the role of "the geographical constituency" (to use Richard Fenno's famous term) in legislative politics, one that views district-level demographic differences as the empirical manifestations of a wide variety of distinct, spatially-bounded socioeconomic contexts that can be found in the contemporary U.S. It is these geographical contexts, not the demographic variables with which they are associated, that ultimately explain how socioeconomic differences across constituencies impact partisan politics within American legislatures.

This introductory chapter will be concerned will three tasks: describing the political developments that have motivated the inquiry at the heart of this dissertation, laying out the theoretical justification for the analytical approach that will guide the inquiry, and presenting an overview of what will follow in each chapter of the dissertation.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL SORTING OF THE AMERICAN ELECTORATE: A SUB-STATE PHENOMENON

Ever since the 2000 presidential election resulted in an electoral map showing a country sharply divided between "red states" and "blue states", the geography of partisan conflict in the United States has been a major topic of interest among observers of American politics. With a few notable exceptions,[2] however, political scientists did not begin to produce studies rigorously examining the nature of the geographical divide in the American electorate until relatively recently. Many of these recent studies have focused on the narrative expounded by journalist Bill Bishop in his well-known 2008 work *The Big Sort*. In the book, Bishop argues that the American electorate has become more geographically polarized over the course of the last several decades as Americans have sorted themselves into politically homogeneous neighborhoods and communities. In telling his tale, Bishop points to a variety of widely-examined social trends which he suggests are contributing to a more balkanized society, some of which include the increased geographical concentration of specific economic sectors (Moretti 2012), the growing divergence in human capital levels across cities and metropolitan areas (Berry and Glaeser 2005; Florida 2002), and differences in settlement patterns between native-born Americans and immigrants (Gimpel 1999; Frey 1996).

Embedded in Bishop's grand narrative are a series of smaller arguments upon which political scientists have focused. Here, I discuss two of these arguments, the first being the claim that the American electorate has become more geographically polarized

[2] These exceptions include: Gimpel 1999; Gimpel and Shuknecht 2004; Ansolabehere, Rodden, and Snyder 2006.

and the second being the notion that the trend of geographical polarization, while often evident in maps partitioning the country into state or regional divisions, is primarily the result of processes occurring at a much smaller (or "microgeographical") scale.[3] While both of these questions have proven to be controversial, the bulk of the scholarly literature has provided qualified support for Bishop's claims.[4] For example, a substantial number of studies have demonstrated the growth of geographical polarization in presidential election results at the congressional district or county level (i.e., below the level of state or region) (Seabrook 2009; Wing and Walker 2010). Hopkins (2009) uncovers strong evidence of growing regional cleavages in presidential voting but, upon closer inspection, attributes them largely (though not entirely) to supra-regional differences between metropolitan and non-metropolitan voters. McKee and Teigen (2009), on the other hand, deploy sophisticated multivariate analyses to show that recent trends of geographical polarization can be independently attributed to the growing importance of microgeographical differences as well as to regional cleavages. They nonetheless emphasize that the growing geographical divide in American politics is

[3] In a 1988 article, J. Clark Archer introduced the concepts of "macrogeographical cleavages"and "microgeographical cleavages," with the former referring to political differences across large-scale regions (the Northeast, South, Midwest, etc.) and the latter referring to political differences across small-scale residential locations. Archer's analyses showed that macrogeographical cleavages had consistently outweighed microgeographical cleavages in influencing presidential election results during the period he considered. However, since his findings are 25 years old, they are not particularly relevant to the contemporary debate about geographical polarization.

[4] To be sure, the scholars who have found evidence in favor of Bishop's narrative have offered more nuanced descriptions of geographical polarization than does Bishop, reflecting the traditional differences between academic and journalistic accounts of a social phenomenon.

primarily related to sorting at the micro level, not sectionalism as it has been traditionally understood.

Several studies have gained a fair amount of notoriety for challenging the thesis of geographical polarization (Klinkner 2004; McGhee and Krimm 2009; Abrams and Fiorina 2012). In the most notable of these, Abrams and Fiorina argue that Bishop's county-level analyses of presidential election results (and, by extension, those of the many studies mentioned above) fail to prove that geographical polarization is occurring for two reasons. First, they contend that presidential election returns are an inappropriate data source with which to examine the extent of geographical political segregation because presidential elections always feature different candidates. This is of consequence, in their view, because contemporary major-party presidential nominees are much more ideologically distinct than they used to be, thereby making it easier for voters to select candidates that align with their personal political persuasions. Thus, they contend, it is entirely possible that the geographical distribution of political preferences in the United States has not changed at all, but that patterns of geographical polarization are increasingly evident in presidential election results because of the greater ideological coherence of party elites. Additionally, Abrams and Fiorina argue that the corpus of studies purporting to demonstrate geographical polarization have not examined data from below the county level. Given the fact that many Americans live in counties with populations in excess of one million that include a wide variety of neighborhoods and communities, inferring microgeographical polarization based on county-level data would seem to be a fallacious exercise.

While the concerns of Abrams and Fiorina are ostensibly quite valid, two new studies present evidence casting substantial doubt on their importance. Myers (2013) uses fine-grained data at the Voter Tabulation District (VTD) level to examine geographical patterns in partisan voting between 1996 and 2010 in Texas, the nation's second largest state. Given that VTDs in Texas have an average population of around 3,000 residents, utilizing them as units of observation largely allays Abrams and Fiorina's criticisms about inferring geographical polarization from county-level data. Moreover, in his study, Myers takes advantage of a unique feature of Texas politics – the abnormally high number of statewide downballot races that occur during both presidential and midterm elections – to construct a measure of VTD partisanship that is immune to the problems caused by a reliance on presidential election results. Consistent with Bishop's thesis, Myers' spatial econometric analyses point to a very strong increase in geographical polarization within the state of Texas during the time period under examination. Like Myers, Walker (2013) uses fine-grained data on election results in Minnesota to demonstrate an extensive increase in geographical polarization in the Twin Cities metropolitan area since the early 1990s. Importantly, despite the fact that they examine states belonging to very different historical regions, Myers and Walker point to similar trends concerning changes in the geographical bases of political parties. Both of their studies show increased clustering of Democratic strength in central cities and inner suburbs and increased clustering of Republican strength in outer suburban and exurban areas (Myers' statewide data also shows an enormous growth in the clustering of Republican strength in rural areas).

GEOGRAPHICAL SORTING AND PARTY CONFLICT IN AMERICA'S LEGISLATIVE BODIES

The conclusions at which the bulk of the studies described above have arrived can be summarized as follows: one, over the past several decades, the American electorate has become increasingly geographically sorted; two, while geographical polarization in the United States has often found expression in state-level and regional patterns, it has occurred primarily (though not exclusively) as a result of highly localized, sub-state processes.

In spite of its status as a phenomenon of mass politics, the growth of geographical polarization in the American electorate has caught the attention of many scholars of American political institutions. Most notably, the phenomenon (described in a variety of ways) has become an important component of explanations of party polarization in the U.S. Congress (Stonecash, Brewer, and Mariani 2003; Mellow and Trubowitz 2005; Oppenheimer 2006; Theriault 2008). Scholars who have sought to establish a connection between geographical sorting in the American electorate and party polarization in the U.S. Congress have isolated a variety of mechanisms purported to lie behind the link. Some have argued that the geographical sorting of the American electorate has caused congressional districts to become more politically homogeneous, thereby leading to the nomination and election of more ideologically extreme candidates (Oppenheimer 2005; Theriault 2008). Others have argued that the geographical sorting of the American electorate has caused the social or regional bases of the congressional parties to become more distinct, thereby creating new opportunities for social conflicts within the electorate

to be translated into elite-level partisan conflict (Stonecash, Brewer, and Mariani 2003; Mellow and Trubowitz 2005; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006).

The fairly substantial number of studies examining the link between geographical sorting and party conflict in Congress has not been matched by a literature of equal size examining whether such a link exists at the state legislative level. Quite to the contrary, and notwithstanding the fact that state legislative scholarship has witnessed a much-deserved resurgence in the past decade, not a single published study has (to this author's knowledge) rigorously examined whether and how a similar connection might exist in the state legislatures. This is indeed strange given the fact that, as discussed above, the geographical sorting of the American electorate has chiefly been a phenomenon occurring *within* rather than *across* states. If different sub-state geographies are increasingly arrayed against each other at the national level, it is reasonable to believe that similar outcomes should be occurring at the state level.

Despite the dearth of scholarly literature examining how geographical sorting has affected legislative politics in the states, anecdotal evidence strongly suggests that these changes have had an important effect on the conduct of state legislatures. For example, publications covering the politics of individual states have produced many articles discussing the political homogenization of particular sub-state regions and the consequences such trends have had for local representation in legislative chambers. Importantly, these articles have tended to emphasizes similar trends in states that, from a historical-regional perspective, would not usually be grouped together. For example, feature-length articles in political publications in Texas, Illinois, Missouri, and Virginia

have all bemoaned the disappearance of Blue Dog-like Democratic legislators from rural, historically Democratic areas. [5] Moreover, a fairly long list of publications targeted at political insiders as well as some national general-interest publications have run feature stories documenting the rise of party conflict in state legislatures.[6] In short, it appears that *something* systematic is changing the geographical contours of legislative politics in the states, even if political scientists have generally not made substantial efforts to discover what it is.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCY: LEGISLATOR PERCEPTIONS AND EXTANT MODELING APPROACHES

This study will concern itself with examining how shifts in the geographical bases of state legislative parties have influenced political conflict and policymaking inside state legislatures. Prior to engaging in such an inquiry, it is necessary to consider an important methodological (perhaps even an ontological) question: how should the role that geographical differences play in legislative politics be studied? Meaningfully assessing this question requires delving deeply into an examination of one of the central issues in the study of democratic politics, the constituency-legislator relationship. More specifically, it requires considering how best to model "the geographical constituency," Richard Fenno's term for denoting "what the [legislator] has in mind when conjuring up 'my district'" (Fenno 1978, 1). It is a legislator's perception of her district, after all, that mediates between the empirical realities inside the physical space she represents and the

[5] See Hamilton 2010, Hester 2011, McDermott 2011, and Brooks 2013.

[6] See especially Brownstein and Bland 2011.

decisions that she makes as a representative. Thus, when bringing district-level variables into analyses of legislative outcomes, scholars need to consider precisely what such variables mean to the actors who create the outcomes – the legislators themselves.

As it turns out, there is a fairly wide gap between what researchers who have conducted in-depth interviews with legislators have concluded about the way legislators perceive their districts and the way most quantitative political science studies have sought to model the geographical constituency. It is worthwhile to compare what the qualitative research has to say about constituency perception with the assumptions behind many quantitative studies of legislative outcomes in order to assess how the harvest of legislative research might be improved.

Legislator Perceptions of the Geographical Constituency

While scholarship examining how legislators perceive their districts has been relatively scant, two classic studies stand out as being especially insightful on the topic: Richard Fenno's *Home Style* (1978), which examines the way members of Congress interact with their constituents when they are traveling in their districts, and Malcolm Jewell's *Representation in State Legislatures* (1982), which uses in-depth interviews in state capitols to examine the various dimensions of state legislative representation. Additionally, a more recent study by Michael Smith (2003) replicates Fenno's research design of observing legislators as they travel through their districts; for his part, Smith follows state legislators in two neighboring states with the goal of making generalizations about the different kinds of representational roles that legislators adopt when they are

among their constituencies. Collectively, these three studies go a long way toward answering the question of how legislators understand their geographical constituency.

In his book, Fenno coins the term "the geographical constituency" to refer to the most expansive of four ways in which members of Congress understand those whom they represent. Whereas the other three ways pertain to particular subgroups within a legislator's district, the geographical constituency refers to the legislator's perception of the district as a whole. Fenno finds striking commonalities across the congressmen he interviews in the way in which they describe their geographical constituencies. First, Fenno finds that members of Congress generally begin describing their districts by situating them in a particular place – "three layers of suburbs to the west of the city", "the core of the city," etc. (2). Few of the representatives Fenno interviews describe their districts without at some point providing some sense of the larger setting in which it is located.

Second, the legislators that Fenno interviews consistently provide detailed descriptions of the demographic compositions of their districts *before* they discuss the districts' political characteristics. Political dispositions therefore appear to be secondary to socioeconomic characteristics in the minds of legislators when they are describing their districts (or, at minimum, this is how legislators want others to think they perceive their districts). As Fenno puts it, "it was as if they wished first to sketch a prepolitical background against which they could paint in the political refinements" (3).

Moreover, when describing their districts' socioeconomic profiles, Fenno finds that legislators provide surprisingly intricate depictions, making reference to "political

science's most familiar demographic…variables." In contemplating their districts, therefore, legislators see complexity rather than uniformity, understanding their geographical constituencies as derived from "some special configuration" of a wide variety of socioeconomic attributes. While Fenno cautions that some members of Congress provide much richer, more variegated descriptions of their districts than others, he nonetheless asserts that no congressman "sees, within his district's boundaries, an undifferentiated glob" (2-3).[7]

Jewell's study confirms that many of Fenno's findings about congressional representation can also be applied to the state legislative setting, while also going beyond Fenno to discover some additional ways in which legislators perceive their geographical constituencies. Whereas for Fenno the space within a district's boundaries constitutes the most expansive constituency that a congressman has, Jewell emphasizes that state legislators sometimes perceive their geographical constituencies as extending beyond their district's borders. This is particularly the case among legislators from large metropolitan areas, many of whom understand their responsibilities to include tending to the interests of an entire city or set of suburbs of which their districts are only a small part. In large metropolitan areas, the interests of a single legislative district are often indistinguishable from the interests of the larger region in which it is situated; as a result,

[7] Fenno warns his fellow political scientists that, while differences in the depth of district descriptions provided by legislators may be due to objective differences in district heterogeneity, they may also be related to the cognitive biases of legislators. To prove his point, Fenno recounts how two successive legislators from the same geographical constituency described their district in quite different manners. The story is meant as a source of caution for political scientists who seek to model the geographical constituency entirely via Census data.

legislators view collaborating with colleagues from adjacent districts to advance the interests of the larger region as an effective way of serving those who elected them. Moreover, in instances in which the boundaries of legislative districts do not coincide with any meaningful demographic demarcations, legislators are even less likely to think in terms of district interests and more likely to think in terms of city or regional interests. Jewell emphasizes, however, that legislators feel responsible for the larger cities or metropolitan areas encompassing their districts only when no major social conflict exists between the legally-bounded areas they represent and other parts of the regions in which their districts are located. A legislator representing a district based in the poverty-stricken sections of a large city, for example, is not likely to express responsibility for advancing the interests of the city's upscale neighborhoods, even if the areas are nearby and in the same jurisdiction.

Smith's (2003) more recent work adds further depth to the findings of Fenno and Jewell by emphasizing the extent to which a legislator's perceptions of his geographical constituency are shaped not just by knowledge of the empirical realities within his district, but also by knowledge of the regional setting in which the district is located and in many cases of the entire territory for which he is legislating (i.e., the entire state). Building on Jewell's premise that metropolitan legislators perceive their geographical constituencies as extending beyond their district boundaries, Smith finds that metropolitan legislators must do "an enormous amount of boundary-crossing" – engaging in legislative work that transcends their district lines, such as speaking at local forums and community events with colleagues from neighboring districts. These sorts of

responsibilities, Smith argues, shift the cognitive focus of legislators from their district boundaries to the larger regions of which their districts are a part. Smith also presents evidence demonstrating that legislators from different types of communities (e.g., impoverished urban neighborhoods, remote small towns, etc.) are keenly aware of how their areas are situated within the greater context of their state's political economy and adopt strategies commensurate with the needs of their regions in the state capital.

When considered in unison, the findings of Fenno, Jewell, and Smith point to an important conclusion – legislators view their geographical constituencies from a profoundly place-based, contextual perspective. Indeed, a surprising similarity exists between the various elements of legislators' perceptions of their geographical constituencies as described by Fenno and Jewell and the frameworks developed by scholars who have sought to unpack the concept of place as it pertains to political life. For example, in his landmark work *Place and Politics* (1987), the political geographer John Agnew proposes an understanding of place that is based on the intersection of three dimensions: locale, location, and sense of place. In his use of the term *locale*, Agnew refers to the geographical setting in which social interactions occur and social relations are constructed. Fenno's recounting of legislators' detailed descriptions of the demographic makeup of their districts, and in particular the nature of interaction between different social groups, strongly suggests that legislators perceive their districts partly as locales. In his use of the term *location*, Agnew alludes to the notion that places represent the convergence of a wide variety of larger economic and geographical forces within a particular space. This dimension of place is closely related to Jewell's descriptions of

legislators' association of their districts with larger geographical regions subject to similar economic processes. Finally, Agnew anchors the concept of place in a third dimension – sense of place – which refers to the overall cognitive affect (or feeling) invoked by a geographically-defined setting. Broadly speaking, the insights of Fenno and Smith about legislators' personal relationship with the areas they represent speak to the way in which legislator perception incorporates this component of the concept of place as well.

Efforts to Model the Geographical Constituency

Having discussed in considerable detail legislators' perceptions of their geographical constituencies, I next turn to examining how scholars of legislative politics have incorporated the geographical constituency into explanations of legislative outcomes and assessing the degree to which these efforts comport with what has been learned about the way legislators understand their constituencies. Efforts to model the geographical constituency can be broadly divided into two categories: studies that decompose the geographical constituency into an array of district-level demographic variables (e.g., percent black, percent urban, percent blue-collar, etc.) and studies that use survey data to develop district-level measures of public opinion. I focus primarily on the first category of studies because these have been the studies that have explicitly tried to account for the sociological aspects of constituency representation. Efforts to develop summary measures of public opinion in "the district," while certainly valuable for answering some research questions, are more tangential to the theoretical thrust of this project and are therefore not discussed here.

The use of district-level Census data to model the geographical constituency has a long and rich history within the field of legislative studies. Possibly the first comprehensive effort in this vein was Julius Turner's landmark study *Party and Constituency* (1952), which examined correlations between constituency demographic characteristics and roll-call voting patterns in the House of Representatives, both within and across the congressional party caucuses. The publication of Turner's study marked the beginning of a period lasting roughly twenty years in which scholarship examining the social origins of legislative conflict by use of Census data, primarily in the U.S. Congress but also in the state legislatures as well, was particularly plentiful (MacRae 1952; MacRae 1958; Derge 1958; Dye 1961; Froman 1963; Flinn 1964; Shannon 1968; LeBlanc 1969). Legislative studies relying on district-level demographics became less common in the early 1970s, but they have nonetheless remained an important component of the legislative studies field. The richly historical studies of David Brady and his colleagues (Brady and Althoff 1974; Brady, Cooper, and Hurley 1979; Brady and Stewart 1982; Brady 1988), as well as more recent scholarship examining the roots of contemporary partisan polarization in Congress (Stonecash, Brewer, and Mariani 2003; McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006; Theriault 2008), stand out as prime examples of the enduring importance of demographically-oriented studies of legislative politics.

The aforementioned studies (which include many seminal works) have contributed much to the accumulation of knowledge about American legislatures over the past half-century. In particular, their insights regarding the link between the constituency bases of political parties and the nature of party conflict inside legislative bodies have

formed the basis for widely-accepted theories about the role of parties in the legislative process (Rohde 1991; Aldrich 1995). In many cases, the demographic approach that these studies have utilized has been entirely appropriate for the research questions that they were designed to address.

Still, one can make a reasonable argument that the approach offered by these studies – stated simply, the use of a small set of demographic variables as indicators of demographic variation across districts – falls short of providing a comprehensive account of the way the geographical constituency shapes political conflict inside America's legislative bodies. In order to understand why this is the case, it is useful to consider what the studies have in common. To begin with, nearly all of them focus on a handful of demographic variables, usually the variables most commonly associated with party conflict in American politics at the time period under examination. Thus, Turner's study, which examines the time period from the 1920s through the 1950s, focuses on variables such as the percentage of resident who are foreign-born, the percentage who are black, and the percentage who live in rural areas. Studies examining the late 19th century, on the other hand, have focused upon variables related to agrarianism and industrialization (Brady and Althoff 1974).

But while a handful of demographic variables may be good proxies for the dominant political cleavages of a given era, they do not come close to encompassing all of the demographic factors that have an influence on legislative representation. Fenno's congressmen, for example, make reference to a wide array of demographic factors operating within their districts, many more than are incorporated into most studies

examining the social origins of legislative conflict. Moreover, while scholars of the American political parties tend to focus upon race, educational attainment, and religious observance as being major markers of political conflict in the modern U.S., they have also pointed to age, urban/rural residence, marital status, household type, and others as being important secondary elements of the contemporary political divide. Few studies examining the link between demographics and legislative outcomes have sought to consider such a wide variety of factors.

More importantly, nearly all of the extant studies addressing the role of constituency characteristics on legislative outcomes have considered individual demographic variables independently of each other, or as competing influences. For example, Turner's classic study devotes separate chapters to each district-level demographic variable, analyzing its individual tendency to cleave the congressional party caucuses, while setting other influences aside. Brady and Stewart (1982) examine the effect of the 1896 realignment upon the social constituencies of the congressional parties, focusing on differences in average values for a variety of district-level demographic variables. Stonecash, Brewer, and Mariani (2003) engage in a similar analysis but focus on a different time period (the late 20th century). In these examples and others, individual demographic variables are viewed as representing the influence of particular social cleavages (i.e., racial/ethnic cleavages, economic cleavages, etc.) upon party conflict in the U.S. Congress. Significant associations between individual district-level demographic variables and measures of partisan representation or roll-call voting are seen as indicating

the translation of a social conflict within the electorate into the partisan politics of a legislative body.

The work of Fenno, Jewell, and Smith, however, alerts us to the fact that legislators often do not see themselves as representing social groups first and foremost. Instead, they tend to understand their districts as collections of communities. While these communities are obviously defined in large part by their resident social groups, legislators nearly always recognize (to at least a certain degree) the complex social graph embedded in the physical spaces they represent. From this perspective, analyzing the geographical constituency as a function of the sum total of district-level demographic attributes, even if a large number of such attributes could be included, does not really approximate how legislators understand their geographical constituencies.

Lastly, the exclusive use of district-level demographic variables tends not to capture an important element of legislator perceptions of the geographical constituency – the position of a district within a larger geographical location or setting. As the studies of Jewell or Smith show, aspatial demographic variables such as race or education form an incomplete picture of the way legislators understand their geographical constituencies, even if their interactions are taken into account. A fuller accounting of the geographical constituency needs to also incorporate intrinsically geographical variables, such as the extent of urbanization and metropolitanization, which can serve as proxies for the larger environment in which districts are situated.

A New Approach to Bringing the Geographical Constituency into State Legislative Politics

We have seen that, for over a half-century, scholars have in various forms modeled the geographical constituency as an important influence on legislative politics, but that the vast majority of these efforts have not done so in a way that approximates the place-based perspective with which legislators actually perceive their districts.

One obvious reason for why scholars have stayed away from developing a place-based model of the geographical constituency is that incorporating the concept of "place" into a rigorous social scientific research design is a task of exceptional difficulty. To some degree, the very notion of the importance of place is antithetical to the social scientific enterprise, which in its extreme forms seeks to replace proper names with variables in the service of developing law-like propositions explaining social phenomena (Przeworski and Teune 1970). Indeed, one prominent political scientist has made the claim that the whole point of social science is to show how place (or "context") does not matter for the purposes of explaining social outcomes (King 1996).

The issue at hand comes into sharper relief when considered in light of the particular research challenge of this dissertation. The primary contention made has been that assessing the role of the geographical constituency by merely adding together the influences of a small number of demographic variables does not closely approximate the way legislators relate to their geographical constituencies, and that a more place-based manner of modeling the geographical constituency is necessary. But the upshot of a community-centered view of social geography is that all communities (and, by extension, legislative districts) are unique, which makes the broadly comparative research

framework to which this study aspires impossible to achieve. A catch-22 therefore emerges: conventional political science methods of modeling the geographical constituency are not commensurate with how legislators understand their districts, but examining the role of the geographical constituency in a way that hews more closely to legislator perceptions would seem to entail abandoning the social scientific enterprise. The famous trade-off between accuracy and parsimony that plagues many comparative social science endeavors once again arises.

The solution I offer in this dissertation attempts to move the study of the geographical constituency a few steps in the direction of greater accuracy while still retaining a strong degree of parsimony. Rather than decomposing the district into a set of demographic variables or creating summary measures of public opinion, my solution is *to model the geographical context of the district itself.* I do this by using a statistical technique – latent profile analysis – that taps into the different ways in which social and economic measures, as well as some intrinsically geographical variables, co-vary across legislative districts. The idea is to develop a quantitative means of categorizing districts on the basis of the contextual realities with which they are associated. Through examining how a wide variety of variables interact within the physical spaces we call districts, we can get much closer to how legislators understand their districts as wholes, particularly as compared with other districts in the chambers in which they serve.

On this matter, there are several important points of clarification that bear mentioning. First, while the statistical model that will uncover the latent district categories will be based on a large amount of district-level demographic and geographical

data, there is no assumption that legislators are familiar with or knowledgeable about all of the observed variables on which the model is based. Quite to the contrary, this project is based on the assumption that legislators recognize their districts as the latent geographical contexts that emerge from the model rather than their empirical manifestations (i.e., the demographic variables). This assumption is justifiable in light of the findings of studies of decision-making among legislative elites, which suggest that legislators have cognitive limitations and use heuristics to simplify the decision-making process (Jones 1994; Jones and Baumgartner 2005).

Put more concretely, it is highly unlikely that, when considering whether the interests of her geographical constituency align with a bill concerning, say, speed limits on state highways (an issue that frequently evokes urban/rural divides), a legislator will calculate how many standard deviations of difference exist between the percentage of rural residents in her district and the mean percentage of rural residents in all districts in a state, as a political scientist might do. Instead, she is more likely to use a cognitive shortcut and consider the bill at hand from the vantage point of the geographical context of her district (e.g., "I come from a deep rural district; this bill is in the interest of my constituency"; "I come from a middle-class suburban district; this bill is not in the interest of my constituency'). Or perhaps, she might look around the legislative chamber and consult with a legislator from an adjacent district, whom she knows has a geographical constituency similar to hers, and ask her colleague how he plans to vote on the bill.

These scenarios are obviously gross oversimplifications of how legislative decision-making works, but they help to clarify how the latent geographical contexts at the heart of this dissertation may serve as important cues for legislators. The ultimate point is that, while some legislators are surely far more knowledgeable about the specific demographic statistics of their districts than others (as Fenno shows), the vast bulk of legislators are likely to maintain basic notions about what *kind of* districts they represent and how their districts compare with those of their colleagues. These are the distinctions for which the latent district categories will serve as rough approximations.

While this study's approach has not (to the author's knowledge) been applied to legislative studies before, it is important to acknowledge the fairly long tradition of taxonomic studies of political geography from which it is partially descended. Efforts to use quantitative clustering techniques to model geographical variation in the United States appear to have premiered, in small numbers, during the 1970s and 1980s (Luttberg 1971; Morgan and England 1987). The chief goal of these early studies was to develop a rigorous way of grouping the fifty American states into distinct cultural categories, and to use the resulting categories to predict state-level political outcomes. Lieske (1993) greatly expanded upon these initial efforts by using similar clustering techniques to isolate "regional subcultures" at the county level. More recently, Mikelbank (2004) has sought to better understand the nature of U.S. suburbanization trends by developing a quantitatively-derived typology of suburban places, and Chinni and Gimpel (2010) have promoted a fascinating new typology of American counties in order to provide a more

nuanced interpretation of the geography of American presidential elections than is generally offered by the national media.[8]

The taxonomic scheme that will be developed differs from those of the foregoing studies in a number of crucial ways. First, as was discussed above, the units of observation will be state legislative districts rather than counties or states. Second, unlike the foregoing studies, this study will incorporate units of observation from more than one time period into a single analysis. As will be made clear in Chapter Two, both of these differences have important consequences with respect to data collection and methodology. Lastly, it bears emphasis that the goal of the taxonomic scheme developed in this dissertation is not to describe "regional subcultures" or to otherwise explain the rich tapestry of the American social landscape, important and legitimate as such goals may be. It is, rather, to model the types of geographical constituencies that state legislators represent. That overarching purpose is crucial to understanding differences between my model and those of the above-mentioned scholars in terms of the independent variables upon which it is based and other aspects of the modeling technique that is used.

Potential Criticisms

The approach I present in this dissertation (i.e., the modeling of the geographical contexts of legislative districts) may provoke a variety of criticisms. Here I make efforts to preemptively respond to three such criticisms that I anticipate. To begin with, some

[8] It is quite possible that I am missing some worthy additional efforts at using quantitative clustering techniques to classify American political geography.

might contend that it is a folly to model the geographical context of an artificial unit such as a legislative district. After all, legislative districts are not organic political communities nor are they longstanding jurisdictions; instead, they are temporary partitions, often created with political goals in mind, that in some instances cut across neighborhoods or other meaningful geographical demarcations. Some might therefore argue that it is too simplistic to attempt to associate any sort of contextual reality with them.

While it is true that legislative districts are artificial entities and that redistricting schemes sometimes result in districts that have tenuous connections to underlying geographical realities, the importance of redistricting is easily overstated, particularly for state legislative politics. To begin with, redistricting for all levels of government in the U.S. is governed by a set of national criteria that are enforceable by federal courts; these criteria, which including roughly equal populations, contiguity, and compactness, constraint the ability of mapmakers to ignore on-the-ground geographical realities to some degree (McDonald 2004). More importantly, a large majority of states have established additional guidelines for the drawing of district lines; in most cases, state standards for state legislative redistricting are substantially more strict and extensive than are the standards for congressional line-drawing.[9] Principles such as respect for existing political and geographical boundaries and protection of communities of interest are fairly commonplace in state legislative redistricting law (Levitt 2010; McDonald 2007) The

[9] For a comprehensive list of guidelines states have established for both state legislative and congressional redistricting, see Levitt, Justin. 2010. *A Citizen's Guide to Redistricting*. Brennan Center for Justice. http://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/legacy/Democracy/CitizensGuidetoRedistricting_2010.pdf (Accessed July 2, 2010).

existence of these guidelines substantially limits the ability of state legislative district line-drawers to run roughshod over the "natural" demarcations of a state's geography.[10]

Another redistricting-related criticism that might be made against this project would focus on the challenge that majority-minority districts pose for the notion that legislators view themselves as representing communities instead of social groups. In states that meet a variety of thresholds related to the size and political distinctiveness of racial and ethnic minority populations, Section 2 of the federal Voting Rights Act (VRA) mandates the creation of districts in which racial and ethnic minorities are the majority of residents. Given that the primary determining factor in the creation of such districts is the presence of one particular social group, some might argue it is likely that legislators from such districts perceive their geographical constituencies in ways that are more intrinsically sociological than they are contextual or place-based.

To some extent, this is a fair point. Indeed, a copious literature suggests that legislators from majority-minority districts place a high priority on the substantive representation of racial and ethnic minorities (Swain 1991; Tate 2003; Casellas 2012); thus, it could well be that intrinsically racial representation trumps place-based representation in the eyes of these legislators. Still, in most situations, these are unlikely to be mutually exclusive choices. Given high rates of racial and ethnic segregation in American society, localities tend to be fairly distinctive in terms of their racial and ethnic compositions. Moreover, Section 2 of the VRA requires that ethnic and racial minority

[10] I do not mean to suggest that oddly-shaped, obviously gerrymandered districts do not exist in contemporary state legislative chambers (they clearly do), but a cursory glance at many state legislative district maps shows that such districts are far from being the majority in most chambers.

populations meet a certain threshold of geographical concentration in order to merit the creation of majority-minority districts. This suggests that majority-minority legislative districts are in most cases likely to encompass socioeconomically distinct places. In these situations, there is no consequential difference between representing a racial/ethnic group and representing a particular *place* in the state legislature.

A final criticism of the approach presented in this project might be that it places too great of an emphasis on "the geographical constituency" as a force impacting legislative behavior. Indeed, Fenno – the creator of the concept – emphasizes that the "geographical constituency" is merely one way in which legislators perceive their constituencies. In fact, says Fenno, members of Congress are just as likely to perceive their constituencies as a variety of district sub-groups (supporters, strong supporters, and close confidantes) . Fenno thus cautions political scientists armed with district-level Census or survey data not to assume that legislators always have "the district" in mind when they consider their constituents. In a more recent work, Miler (2010) picks up on Fenno's insights to criticize congressional researchers for focusing excessively on the interests of "the district." Miler argues that cognitive limitations prevent members of Congress from accurately seeing the district as a whole, and that members of Congress are far more likely to see subconstituencies – "collections of constituents identified by their synonymous interest in a given policy area" – than they are to see the interests of all whom they represent (21).

Several points need to be mentioned here. First, it is important to emphasize that, with the exception of the districts of the California and Texas Senates, state legislative

districts are quite a bit smaller than congressional districts, so the kinds of cognitive biases in constituency perception that Miler discusses are somewhat less likely to be evident among most state legislators.[11] Indeed, it is almost certain that most state legislators have a better grasp of their geographical constituencies than members of Congress do, given the smaller sizes of their districts. More importantly, however, it bears repeating that this study makes no claim about the accuracy with which legislators perceive all of the diverse groups within their geographical constituency. Rather, the claim is that legislators maintain a basic view of the nature of their geographical constituency in comparison to those of their colleagues. Geographical context is hypothesized to serve as a heuristic for legislators in much the same way that subconstituencies serve as heuristic references for members of Congress in Miler's study.

Finally, it may be useful at this point to qualify the aspirations of this project. The goal of this dissertation is not to develop an all-encompassing theory of the constituency-legislator relationship, something that would be a truly vast undertaking. Instead, it is to develop a new approach to analyzing one component of that relationship – the geographical constituency – and to use that approach to examine important questions concerning how changes in American electoral geography have altered the course of state legislative politics over the past twenty years. While it may be true that the extant studies of representation have focused excessively on the geographical constituency, it is also true that such studies have never before tried to model the geographical constituency

[11] Miler herself argues that the biases that emerge in congressional perception are largely a result of the large size of contemporary U.S. House districts (155-159).

comprehensively. This study attempts to do so; it is left to the readers to assess how successful the attempt has been.

AN OVERVIEW OF WHAT FOLLOWS

To summarize what has been covered thus far: extant literature has shown that the American electorate has become more geographically sorted over the past several decades, a process that has occurred as a result of a variety of socioeconomic and political trends occurring across the country at the microgeographical level. Anecdotal evidence suggests that changes in the American electorate may be having an impact on state legislative politics and policymaking, particularly through effecting shifts in the geographical bases of state legislative parties and altering traditional legislative coalitions. To investigate whether and how this has occurred, this study will adopt a new approach to analyzing the geographical constituency, one that seeks to more accurately model the way legislators perceive their districts. This approach is based on utilizing a technique that isolates latent geographical contexts on the basis of the covariations among a wide variety of district-level demographic and geographical variables.

Chapter Two picks up immediately where this introductory chapter leaves off and launches into a presentation of my efforts to model "the geographical constituency." These efforts involve the marshaling of extensive district-level data for over 3500 legislative districts from both the 1990s and 2000s for seventeen legislative chambers for the purposes of isolating the latent geographical categories that serve as the foundation of this study. In addition to explaining the modeling technique, I discuss various issues regarding data collection as well as analysis and interpretation of the technique's results.

After explaining the methodology, I unveil the nine-fold district categorical solution that emerges. Various aspects of the nine district categories, including their distinguishing characteristics, are discussed in great detail.

In Chapter Three, the categorization scheme that was unveiled in Chapter Two is used as the basis for a detailed exploration of the ways in which demographic trends have interacted with electoral changes to bear upon patterns of partisan representation in the American state legislatures. Whereas changes in the relative prevalence of the district categories between Censuses are viewed as outcomes of demographic trends, changes in the tendency of the various district categories to be represented by Republicans are viewed as outcomes of electoral change. The chapter shows how examining the ways in which demographic and electoral developments come together through the district categories provides a rich account of the course of party conflict in state legislatures (and, arguably, in the country as a whole). In particular, the chapter demonstrates that, while demographic changes (i.e., changes in the relative prevalence of district categories) have worked to the benefit of Democrats, electoral changes (i.e., changes in the political hue of the district categories) have worked to the benefit of Republicans.

Chapter Four shifts to a focus on outcomes inside legislatures. With the goal of examining the relationship between party, geography, and roll-call voting ideology, I collect and analyze extensive roll-call data from the seventeen legislative chambers under examination for two time periods: 1999-2000 and 2011-2012. My results reveal systematic ways in which state legislative chambers differ with respect to the independent impact of geography (operationalized as the district categories) as well as its interaction

with party in influencing roll-call voting patterns. Most notable are the results among Democratic Caucuses, within which legislators from the most urban district categories consistently occupy the liberal flanks while legislators from the most rural district categories consistently occupy the conservative flanks. I also examine how the interaction between party influence and geographical influence changed between the two time periods I analyze. I find very strong evidence that the sharply diminished presence of Democratic legislators from the most rural district categories in the latter period has caused a leftward shift in the ideological characteristics of many Democratic caucuses, thereby causing greater partisan polarization.

Chapter Five moves from a generic focus on roll-call voting outcomes to a more policy-based analysis of the same dependent variable. More specifically, I develop a series of hypotheses concerning various ways in which geographical cleavages related to substantive policy disputes manifest themselves as particular roll-call voting alignments involving legislators from each of the district categories. Testing my hypotheses on roll-call voting data for politically consequential votes in three legislative chambers, I find some support for my hypotheses, but also some indications that a variety of additional factors need to be taken into account in order to gain a proper understanding of the relationship between policy content and geographical conflict in state legislatures.

In the concluding chapter of the dissertation, I summarize the core findings of each chapter of the dissertation, synthesize insights gleaned from separate chapters into a more coherent corpus of knowledge, and examine some important consequences that flow from the dissertation's analyses. These consequences, I contend, are not simply

relevant for understanding the fundamentals of contemporary state legislative politics. Rather, I suggest there is reason to believe that the forces under examination in this dissertation (i.e., the sub-state geographical sorting of the American electorate and the partisan transformations of state legislatures) are increasingly shaping the course of American politics writ large.

Chapter Two: Modeling the Geographical Constituency Using Latent Profile Analysis

The primary purpose of Chapter Two is to lay the empirical foundation upon which the remainder of the project will rest. Stated simply, that foundation is a quantitatively-derived classification scheme that seeks to model the geographical constituencies that contemporary state legislators represent. The chapter has several specific purposes, the first of which is to explain the modeling technique I employ to uncover the classification scheme. In brief, I use a procedure called Latent Profile Analysis, which estimates a latent categorical variable that captures covariation among a large number of continuous observed variables. In addition to explaining the modeling technique, I discuss various issues regarding data collection as well as analysis and interpretation of the technique's results. After explaining the methodology, I unveil the nine-fold categorical solution that emerged as a result of the Latent Profile Analysis. Various aspects of the nine district categories, including their distinguishing characteristics and variation in their presence across states, are discussed in great detail. I also discuss how the nine-class solution achieves the basic goal of modeling the geographical constituency in a manner that more closely approximates how legislators understand their districts in relation to those of their colleagues.

INTRODUCING LATENT PROFILE ANALYSIS

Statisticians have in recent decades developed sophisticated new methods for analyzing how observations are clustered on the basis of a large set of observed

characteristics. These methods help to overcome many of the problems associated with older clustering approaches. One of these techniques, which I employ to develop a typology for state legislative districts based on their demographic characteristics, is Latent Profile Analysis (LPA). LPA identifies an unobserved categorical variable that explains heterogeneity across observations in the relationships among a large number of continuous dependent variables.

From a modeling standpoint, LPA is a close analogue of factor analysis, since both procedures estimate an unobserved variable that is assumed to account for the relationships among observed variables (McCutcheon 1987). The principle empirical difference between LPA and factor analysis is that, in the latter, the latent variable is continuous, while in the former it is categorical.[12] The research objectives of LPA, on the other hand, tend to be similar to those of traditional forms of cluster analysis (i.e., uncovering groups of observations on the basis of observable data), but unlike the traditional forms, LPA is a *model-based* approach to quantitative categorization. While the same model is used to estimate each latent category, the parameter values governing the relationships between the observed variables (in this case, district demographics) and the likelihood that observations belong to a given category differ. The latent variable that assigns observations to categories is, in turn, assumed to account for all associations in the outcomes for the dependent variables (Muthen 2001). Thus, after the latent categorical variable is introduced, there should be no remaining relationship between the

[12] There is a more profound theoretical distinction between LPA and factor analysis, which is discussed in Appendix One.

values of the outcome variables among the observations (Muthen 2001; Vermunt and Magidson 2002; Marsh 2009).[13]

Because it is a model-based approach, LPA offers several advantages over conventional clustering techniques. In particular, LPA analyses provide researchers with a variety of diagnostic statistics related to model fit and model usefulness, which (when combined with a substantive examination of the results) are useful in determining the most appropriate class solution (i.e., the number of categories that together constitute the best possible explanation of the covariation in the observed variables). Additionally, whereas traditional clustering techniques assign observations to categories on an "all-or nothing basis" (Pastor et al. 2007), LPA gives each observation a probability statistic related to the likelihood that it is a member of a given category. Finally, unlike older clustering techniques, LPA does not require that the observed variables be scaled for equivalence or that the distributions of outcome variables approximate normality (Vermunt and Magidson 2002).

DATA AND METHODS

The observations used in this study are 3,504 districts of the lower houses of seventeen states. These include districts from two redistricting cycles: 1993-2002 and 2003-2012. In all seventeen states that were included, the number of districts within the lower legislative chambers did not change throughout the period at hand; thus, exactly half of the districts (1,752) come from the earlier period and the other half come from the latter period.

[13] A more detailed explanation of LPA can be found in Appendix One.

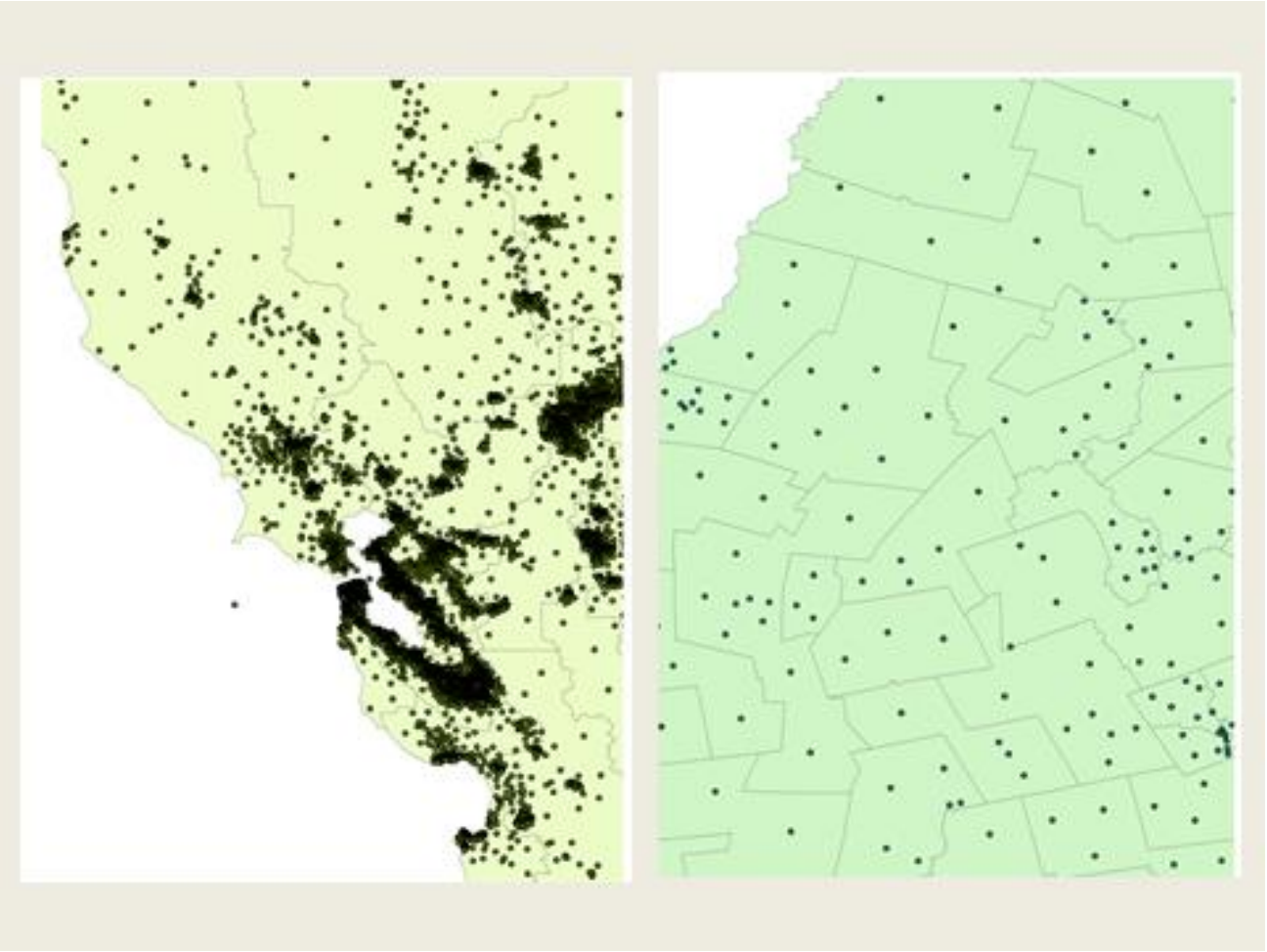
State Selection

A variety of factors determined which states were included in the analysis, the first and foremost of which were data availability and reliability. The ability to extend this project to legislative chambers in all fifty states was restricted substantially by the fact that extensive demographic data for 1990s state legislative districts are not readily available.[14] Consequently, demographic data for half of the observations included in this project needed to be calculated from data for smaller areal units. In order to conduct these calculations, I used a GIS method known as spatial joining to associate 1990s state legislative districts with 1990 demographic data for Census block groups that fall within their boundaries.[15] In spatial joining, a map of fine-grained areal sub-units (in this case, Census block groups) is converted into a new map in which the areal units are represented by their centroids (i.e., their geographical midpoints). The centroid map is then overlaid by a map in which the same macro-geography is divided into much larger areal units (in this case, state legislative districts). The various demographic values pertaining to the smaller units are then associated to the larger units that encompass their centroids. Finally, the values for the smaller sub-units that are associated with a given larger sub-unit are summed together, yielding an estimate of the larger sub-unit's demographic values.

[14] District data for the 2000s *are* readily available, thanks to a U.S. Census project launched in 2006). They were accessed from the U.S. Census's Factfinder website.
[15] Census block groups are the most fine-grained areal unit for which most Census data are available. Block group data from the 1990 Census were downloaded from the outstanding web application Social Explorer® (www.socialexplorer.com).

My careful examination of this technique suggests that it produces very reliable estimates of district demographics for many but not all state legislative chambers. The key issue at hand is district population – where district populations are exceptionally small, the estimates are far more suspect. To explain further, I provide Figure 2.1 (next page), which includes a map of Census block group centroids overlaid by legislative district boundaries in north-central California (left) and north-central New Hampshire (right). As can be seen in the left side of the figure, California Assembly districts encompass hundreds of Census block group centroids, as would be expected in a legislative chamber in which districts have populations of over 400,000. The right side of the figure, however, demonstrates the opposite scenario. New Hampshire State House Districts, which in some cases have populations of less than 3,500, often encompass only a handful of Census block group centroids. Because each of these centroids corresponds to an areal unit that does not necessarily fall within one legislative district's boundaries, demographic estimates that are calculated via a spatial joining of Census block group data in New Hampshire tend to incur a lot of error.

Figure 2.1: Spatial Joining of Census Block Groups to State Legislative Districts in Northern California and North-Central New Hampshire



While the New Hampshire State House (given the exceptionally small populations of some of its legislative districts) is the most extreme example of the aforementioned problem, my examination suggests the problem is consequential in other small-district chambers as well. To help ensure that the demographic data in my sample are reliably estimated, I eliminated from the sample all legislative chambers with district population sizes of less than 25,000. Most of these chambers were located either in New England, where the states are unusually small and the legislative chambers are unusually large, or

in the Great Plains and Mountain West, where the states tend to be very lightly-populated.[16]

In addition to the difficulties involved with producing reliable demographic estimates for legislative districts with small populations, one other issue had the effect of substantially reducing the number of states that could be included in the analysis. That issue was the implementation of multiple maps of legislative district boundaries in many states during both the 1990s and 2000s. As is well-known, congressional and state legislative redistricting schemes are frequently the subject of court fights, especially in jurisdictions that were until recently covered by Section 5 of the federal Voting Rights Act. When these court challenges are successful, new district maps are drawn to replace the old maps in the middle of a redistricting cycle. Moreover, in some states, legislatures have the ability to alter district lines in the middle of a decade without a court mandate, and in the first decade of the 2000s, a number of them did so (Levitt and McDonald 2007).[17]

For a variety of reasons, the presence of multiple district maps within a single decade presents significant methodological challenges for this project. To begin with, redrawn districts will have demographic characteristics that are likely to be at least somewhat different from the original districts (indeed, altering the racial and ethnic

[16] See Appendix Two for a more detailed explanation of my examination of the spatial joining procedure, as well as evidence that the 1990s demographic estimates for the seventeen chambers that were included in my sample are reliable.

[17] The mid-decade redrawing of congressional district lines in Texas in 2004 is likely the most famous example of such behavior. Less well-known, however, is the fact that at least five other states redrew their congressional or state legislative district lines absent court mandate during the 2000s.

characteristics of districts is precisely the mandate that most courts give to legislatures when they order that new district lines be drawn). While it is doubtful that rerunning the LPA with data from new district lines would greatly impact the model being estimated or result in a different set of latent categories, it is quite possible that the most likely latent class membership of some redrawn districts would change. The extent to which the latter would occur is impossible to determine because, in most states in which mid-decade redistricting frequently occurs, demographic data for old district lines are not available (and neither are GIS shapefiles that can allow for the estimation of such data).

So as to bypass the problems potentially caused by including chambers that utilized multiple district maps in a single decade, I extensively researched the history of redistricting for each state legislative chamber that was a viable candidate for inclusion in this study.[18] Most chambers for which multiple district maps were used during either the 1990s or 2000s were removed from the analysis. Two exceptions were the Alabama House and Minnesota House. In both of these chambers, one district map was used from 1994 until 2002, rather than from 1992 until 2002. Because these maps were developed using 1990 Census data and remained in effect for the bulk of the 1990s redistricting period, I concluded it was legitimate to include these two chambers in the LPA while removing observations for these two chambers from all pre-1994 data points in subsequent analyses.

[18] Sources of information included summaries of 1990s redistricting cases in all fifty states compiled by the MN Legislative Coordinating Commission (http://www.gis.leg.mn/OpenLayers/redistricting/1990/case/index.php), summaries of 2000 redistricting cases in all fifty states compiled by redistricting scholar Justin Levitt (http://redistricting.lls.edu), and most importantly, conversations with knowledgeable authorities in each of the states I examined.

Table 2.1 (next page) presents data on the seventeen state legislative chambers that were included in the LPA. As can be seen, the sample of state legislative chambers includes chambers from three states on the eastern seaboard (New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania), five states in the industrial Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin), three states in the portion of the Midwest to the west of the Mississippi River (Iowa, Minnesota, and Missouri), four states in the far West (California, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington), and two states in the South (Alabama and Virginia). Two regions (New England and the Intermountain West) are absent from the sample because states in these regions tend to have legislative districts of exceptionally small populations, thereby rendering their inclusion in the study problematic for reasons explained earlier. Additionally, Southern states are underrepresented in the sample because they are frequent sites of court fights over redistricting and are therefore more likely to have implemented multiple state legislative district maps in a single decade.

Table 2.1: Relevant Data on Lower State Legislative Chambers Included in Latent Profile Analysis

Chamber	Number of Districts
Alabama House	105
California Assembly	80
Illinois House	118
Indiana House	100
Iowa House	100
Michigan House	110
Minnesota House	134
Missouri House	163
Nevada Assembly	42
New Jersey Assembly	40
New York Assembly	150
Ohio House	99
Oregon House	60
Pennsylvania House	203
Virginia House	100
Washington House	49
Wisconsin Assembly	99

Demographic Variables

District-level data on twelve variables were included in the analysis. All but one of these variables was calculated from individual-level demographic data taken directly from the U.S. Census; the lone remaining variable is an index constructed from aggregate data from the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

The twelve variables included in the analysis all met three basic criteria. First, each of the variables corresponded (or was at least related) to an important social cleavage in contemporary American politics. Second, demographic data to measure each of the variables were either available, or could be tabulated, at the state legislative district level. Unfortunately, a number of important demographic variables (most notably, all of

the ones pertaining to religious adherence and observance) could not be included because no data existed for them that could be linked to legislative district boundaries.

Finally, all of the included variables were calculated from data that were deemed to be sufficiently comparable across the 1990s and 2000s districts in the sample. Because the U.S. Census frequently changes its schemes for classifying important demographic attributes, care needs to be taken to ensure comparability when combining data from more than one Census period into a single analysis. To this end, all of the data used to calculate demographic variables were carefully researched, up to and including contact with knowledgeable Census officials. In one case (urban-rural populations), 1990 and 2000 data were initially incomparable but specific ArcGIS techniques (based upon recommendations from Census Bureau officials) were used to adjust 1990 data so that they would better comport with 2000 data.[19] Where data were incomparable and no adjustment technique could be employed, the variables to be calculated based upon those data were not included in the analysis. For this reason, important variables related to industry and occupational sectors are absent from the LPA.

The following is a list of the eleven demographic variables compiled from individual-level Census data that were included in the LPA:

- The percentage of district residents who are black/African American (BLACK)
- The percentage of district residents who are Hispanic (HISPANIC)
- The percentage of district residents living in urban areas (URBAN)

[19] See Appendix Two for a more detailed explanation of the techniques that were used.

- The percentage of district residents at least 25 years of age who have attained a Bachelor's degree or above. (BA)
- The percentage of district residents under the age of 18 (UNDER18)
- The percentage of district residents 65 years of age and over (OVER65)
- The percentage of district residents living in family households (FAM)
- The percentage of district residents, 15 years of age and over, who are married (MAR)
- The percentage of district residents, 5 years of age and over, who speak only English at home (ENG)
- The percentage of employed district residents, 16 years of age and over, who are private-sector salaried employees (PRIVSEC)
- The percentage of employed district residents ,16 years of age and over, who are self-employed (SELFEMP)

In addition to these variables, one final variable – an index measuring the extent of metropolitanization (METRO) of a legislative district – was included. Unlike the other eleven variables, METRO is calculated not from individual-level Census data but instead from the OMB's 2003 Urban-Rural Continuum Codes, which classify counties according to their integration with metropolitan areas. Legislative districts were related to county populations via ArcGIS, and a truncated version of the OMB Codes was constructed for districts based on these relationships. Appendix Two provides further details of how METRO was calculated on the basis of the OMB codes.

While METRO is ostensibly similar to URBAN, the two variables are actually quite distinct with respect to what they measure. URBAN is calculated from the U.S.

Census's urban-rural categorization, which is based upon a micro-level distinction that emphasizes "rural separation" (Isserman 2005). More specifically, the Census uses an extremely intricate set of criteria based upon population thresholds and density measures to associate Census block groups with "urban clusters" or "urbanized areas" (two Census concepts whose specific meanings need not detain us here). All Census block groups that cannot be associated with urban clusters or urbanized areas are considered rural by default. Conversely, the METRO measure is calculated from the OMB's county-level categorization, which is based upon macro-level distinctions that emphasizes "rural integration" (Isserman 2005). Population thresholds and density measures are used to identify counties that are "nuclei" of metropolitan areas. These counties are then linked to neighboring counties via data on transportation and employment patterns; the resulting linkages are what the OMB calls Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs). Thus, many places in the contemporary U.S. are considered rural on the basis of the Census' categorization scheme but, because they lie within CBSAs, are also viewed as parts of metropolitan areas. Conversely, other places are considered urban based on the Census categorization scheme but do not fall within the boundaries of CBSAs. Including both METRO and URBAN is therefore necessary to gain a comprehensive picture of the geographical setting of state legislative districts.

Analysis

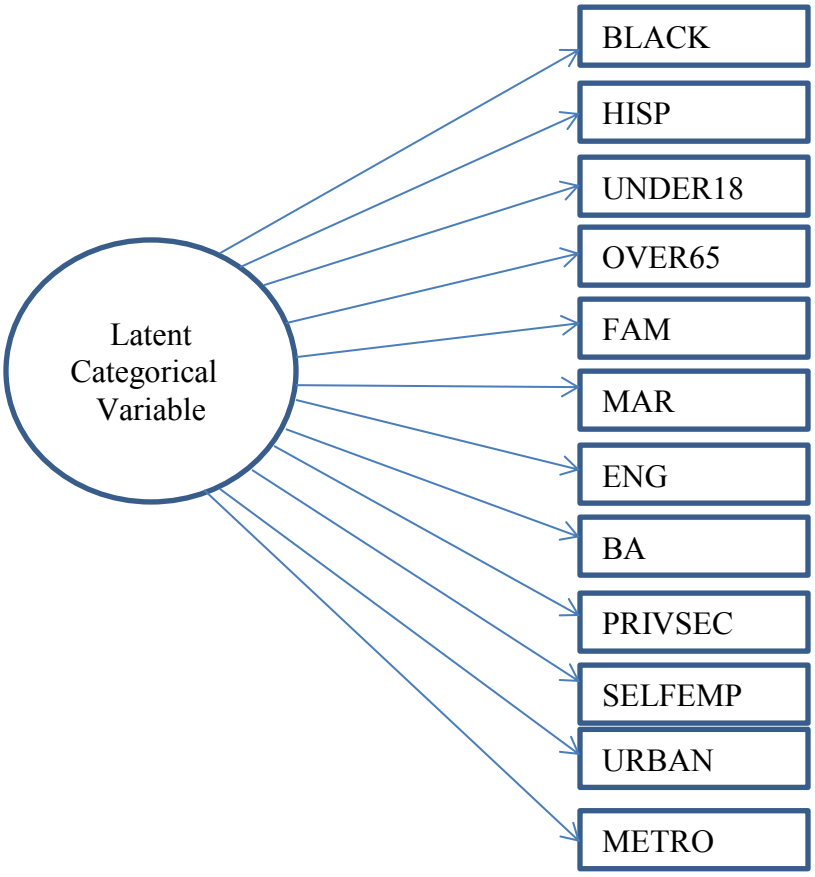
The LPA analysis was conducted in MPlus™ version 6. Because many of the twelve demographic variables used in the study have distributions that are non-normal and cannot be easily transformed to approximate normality, I conducted the LPA using a

maximum likelihood estimator with standard errors that are robust to non-normality, which is highly recommended under such circumstances (Muthen and Muthen 2012). All 3,504 state legislative districts from the 1990s and 2000s were pooled into a single analysis.

As mentioned previously, LPA is based upon the conditional independence assumption (i.e., the assumption that the latent categorical variable accounts for all of the association between the outcome variables) (Muthen 2001). Before running an LPA analysis, researchers must consider the conceptual validity of this assumption with respect to their data and take steps to override it if they determine that that it is not tenable. In considering my data, I concluded that each of the twelve outcome variables I am using represent concepts that are fairly distinct from each other. Furthermore, in examining a correlation matrix for all of the demographic variables, I found that the Pearson's correlation coefficient exceeded .75 for only one pair of variables: HISP and ENG (-.892). Despite their high level of negative correlation, however, HISP and ENG appear to be conceptually quite different. Whereas HISP measures Hispanic percentages, ENG measures percentages of English-only household. Given that there are a wide variety of language minority groups in the United States besides Hispanics, the importance of maintaining a strict distinction between HISP and ENG would appear to be vital. I therefore decided to run a modeling framework incorporating the conditional assumption that all of the outcome variables (including HISPANIC and ENG) are independent of each other after the latent categorical variable has been taken into

account. The modeling framework that I employ is displayed visually in Figure 2.2 (below).

Figure 2.2: Modeling Framework for Latent Profile Analysis of State Legislative Districts



One element that is conspicuously absent from the modeling framework is an effort to weight the observations in the sample on the basis of the chambers to which they belong. As Table 2.1 showed, some chambers have many more districts than others, and are therefore more represented in the sample. Some might therefore suggest that a weighting scheme should be employed to equalize the relative contributions of each

chamber to the sample, or to adjust the relative contribution of each chamber to the sample in accordance with its state's population.

While this suggestion is not without merits, I have decided not to act on it for several reasons. To begin with, a comparison of weighted and unweighted LPA results suggests that weighting the observations would not affect the resulting LPA solution very much.[20] More importantly, it is necessary to reiterate that the ultimate purpose of the LPA is to model the geographical entity that is the legislative district, not the states to which legislative districts belong or the geographical tapestry of the entire country. With this particular goal in mind, it makes little sense to weight up districts from certain states and weight down districts from others. The overrepresentation of certain chambers in the sample is simply a byproduct of the fact that some states have much larger legislatures than others. This is a basic reality of legislative life in the states, and I have decided that altering it through weighting is neither necessary nor desirable for the purposes of this project.

Selecting the Right Number of Latent Categories

A crucial aspect of all LPA analyses is selecting the final model (i.e., the most appropriate number of latent categories). As discussed above, LPA analyses provide researchers with a number of diagnostic statistics, which they can combine with a substantive examination of the model results to determine which class solution is optimal. There are no strict guidelines for making a determination about which solution is the

[20] See Appendix Three for a discussion of how the unweighted and weighted LPA models compare.

correct one. Instead, the diagnostic statistics, as well as a substantive consideration of the categories that emerge, serve as pieces of evidence whose usefulness vary depending on individual research circumstances. It is ultimately the researcher's job to use these pieces of evidence (and adjudicate among them if they happen to point toward different conclusions) to make the best judgment possible about the appropriate number of classes.

In this study, I make use of six diagnostic statistics that have become commonplace in LPA studies. The first of these are the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC) and sample-size adjusted BIC, two examples of a larger set of diagnostics known as information criteria (ICs). ICs measure model fit by combining the log-likelihoods of the fitted models with a penalty term for greater numbers of parameters. While several ICs have been proposed and implemented, the BIC and its adjusted counterpart have been shown to be the best performers in simulation studies of LPA and similar techniques (Yang 2006; Nylund et al. 2007; Wu 2009). In general, lower values for BIC and adjusted BIC indicate better model fit.

Another set of diagnostic statistics come from likelihood ratio tests that are used to assess the significance of differences between two nested models. Three such tests are the Vuong-Lo-Mendell-Rubin (VLMR) Test, the adjusted VLMR Test, and the Bootstrap Likelihood Ratio Test (BLMR). The VLMR and adjusted VLMR tests use an approximation of the Chi-Square distribution to compare the models (Lo, Mendell, and Rubin 2001; Herman et al. 2007; Nylund et al. 2007), while BLMR uses bootstrapping to estimate the distribution of the statistic used to compare the models (Nylund et al. 2007). All three tests examine the null hypothesis that a model of *n* categories does not evince an

improvement in fit over a model of *n-1* categories. A low p-value indicates rejection of the null hypothesis and support for the inclusion of at least *n* categories, while a high p-value indicates that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected and that a solution of *n-1* categories is sufficient to explain the data.[21] Recent studies have suggested that the BLMR may be a better indicator of model fit than the VLMR and adjusted VLMR (Nylund et al. 2007; Wu 2009), but VLMR and its adjusted counterpart are widely used and are therefore included as well.

A final diagnostic statistic that I use is the entropy statistic. Unlike the ICs and likelihood ratio tests, entropy is not a measure of model fit but rather a measure of model usefulness. It assesses the overall probability that the LPA has classified each of the observations in the sample into its correct category. Entropy values range from 0 to 1, with values closer to 1 indicating a higher classification utility. While useful in assessing classification strength, it should not be used to assess model fit in the absence of other metrics (Herman et al. 2007).

In accordance with proper LPA methods, I ran many different models, each of which posited a latent variable with a different number of categories. Table 2.2 (next page) shows results for each of the six diagnostic statistics for the seven-class to thirteen class solutions. As can be seen, the statistics do not jointly provide a clear indication of which class solution should be selected. Indeed, most of the statistics appear to suggest

[21] While the fact that these tests assess the statistical significance of higher-order solutions makes them valuable, it is important to bear in mind that they are only useful for comparing nested models. If a researcher believes that the true class solution is not necessarily nested within a class solution of one fewer categories, these tests may not be appropriate.

that solutions of even more than 13 categories might be appropriate. For example, the BIC and adjusted BIC values experience a relatively continuous decrease as the class solutions of the models become larger, indicating that more complex solutions continuously offer better fit. While the magnitude of the decrease in the BIC and adjusted BIC values does appear to shrink as the models become more complex, it does not completely taper off. Similarly, the BLMR tests yield highly significant p-values through the 13-class solution, indicating that each class solution is statistically a better fit than the one before it. Finally, each of the models registers exceptionally high entropy values, suggesting that the classification system that emerges from the LPA is consistently strong across the models. The difference between the entropy values are minor and not particular important.

Table 2.2: Diagnostic Statistics For Various LPA Solutions

Class Solution	Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC)	Sample-size Adjusted BIC	VLMR Test (p-value)	Adjusted VLMR (p-value)	BLMR (p-value)	Entropy
7	281331.89	281636.29	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.938
8	279361.81	279704.99	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.936
9	**279014.64**	**278607.92**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.000**	**0.932**
10	278188.46	277740.32	0.6221	0.6234	0.000	0.935
11	276415.68	276875.24	0.1582	0.1592	0.000	0.927
12	276652.76	276122.12	0.7384	0.7393	0.000	0.927
13	275879.18	275307.24	0.6439	0.6448	0.000	0.930

Unlike the other diagnostics, the VLMR and adjusted VLMR point to the nine-category solution as the most optimal. These tests produce extremely small p-values for all class solutions through the nine-class model. With the 10-class model, however, the p-

values jumps to .6221 and .6234 and do not return to levels generally accepted as indicating statistical significance ($p<.05$) in more complex solutions. Thus, these tests provide some important evidence that the nine-class solution should be selected.

The fact that the diagnostic statistics do not clearly indicate a preferred class solution, and that most in fact point to the need for highly complex solutions, suggests that these statistics may be of limited utility for the purpose of this study. This is not an unheard-of conclusion among studies utilizing LPA. Indeed, in their LPA-based analysis, Marsh et al. (2009) also find that the results of the diagnostics are not particularly consistent and thus caution other researchers that model selection "cannot be based on a mechanical application of recommendations about fit indexes" (215). In many cases, they contend, admittedly subjective evaluations of the class solutions in terms of the nature of categories and interpretability may be more useful than measures of model fit, which should only be secondarily considered.

My substantive examination of the different class solutions suggests that the BIC, adjusted BIC, BLMR, and entropy values are the results of complexities in my data that, while significant from a statistical perspective, are not indicative of inherently different geographical contexts. Indeed, the BLMR continues to yield highly significant p-values through a twenty-class solution, by which point the distinctions among many of the categories are extremely fine-grained and substantively meaningless. Instead, examining the solutions leads me to conclude that the most appropriate class solution is the nine-class solution, which matches nicely with the results of the VLMR and adjusted VLMR tests. Up until the nine-class solution, the addition of an extra category results in the

isolation of a fairly distinct geographical context, one that would be fairly recognizable to most students of American political geography (as will be shown in the next section of the chapter). Beginning with the ten-class solution, however, the newly-added categories appear to be of little substantive import.

Thus, based primarily upon my evaluation of the interpretability of the various class solutions and secondarily upon the results of the VLMR and adjusted VLMR tests, my decision is to use the nine-class solution as the basis for this study. While this decision is not clear-cut and I cannot dismiss the possibility that the nine-class solution may obscure substantively important intra-category differences of which I am not aware, the nine-class solution appears to be the most sensible when substantive, statistical, and practical considerations are considered in unison.[22]

THE NINE CATEGORIES OF LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS

After choosing the most appropriate model, it is up to the researcher to provide substantive interpretation to the different classes that emerge. In this quest, the researcher is aided by a number of tools that MPlus™ provides, including a detailed model quantitatively estimating the relationship between each latent class and the outcome variables, estimated probabilities that a given observation belongs to a given class, and weighted averages of each of the outcome variables for the respective latent classes.

[22] The nine-class solution is further justified by robustness tests ensuring that the same nine district categories emerge when a nine-class model is estimated with samples composed only of districts from the 1990s or 2000s. See Appendix Three for a discussion of the results of these tests.

Table 2.3 (next page) provides a list of each of the latent classes of legislative districts, along with the averages of the outcome variables (weighted by the estimated class probabilities for each observation) for them.

Table 2.3 : Mean Statistics for Latent Categories (Weighted by Estimated Class Probabilities)

Class Description	BLACK (%)	HISP (%)	UNDER18 (%)	OVER65 (%)	FAM (%)	MAR (%)	ENG (%)	BA (%)	PRIVSEC (%)	SELFEMP (%)	URBAN (%)	METRO (%)
Urban Black	65.5	4.7	28.1	12.0	66.4	37.0	90.2	14.8	68.7	3.8	95.5	91.3
Urban Hispanic	16.5	59.3	31.2	7.9	73.5	44.5	37.0	11.2	75.7	4.7	98.7	97.0
Urban Ethnic Matrix	11.3	21.6	24.9	12.4	66.4	50.7	64.1	22.7	72.8	5.8	98.0	93.4
Yuppie	8.9	6.5	14.8	11.3	42.3	36.6	83.2	48.4	62.4	6.6	96.9	80.8
Middle-Class Suburbs	8.1	3.3	23.5	14.9	65.2	52.3	91.8	19.2	73.3	5.0	93.9	76.1
Outer Suburbs	4.1	3.0	27.9	9.2	76.4	62.4	93.2	24.6	75.1	5.4	82.1	90.2
Upscale Suburbs	5.2	4.0	23.7	12.8	69.2	59.0	87.2	43.2	70.5	6.6	96.5	92.3
Small City & Country	4.0	1.9	25.7	14.1	72.6	60.3	95.5	14.4	70.6	7.9	43.2	28.5
Deep Rural	0.6	1.4	26.2	17.7	71.3	62.7	95.8	12.9	62.9	14.8	26.8	8.2

Here, I turn to discussing each of the types of districts in brief:

- **Urban Black Districts** – These districts are most readily identified by the high percentage of African-American residents and urban residents within them. They are particularly prominent in cities with large black communities such as Chicago, Detroit, and St. Louis. They also stand out in the high percentage of their residents who are children, the low percentage of their residents who are married, and the relatively low percentage of their residents who speak a language other than English at home (especially when compared with other urban district categories).
- **Urban Hispanic Districts** – This class of districts includes districts encompassing Hispanic sections of the country's largest cities. They tend to exhibit extremely high percentages of Hispanic residents, high percentages of residents who speak a language other than English, high percentages of residents under 18 years of age, and high percentages of family households.
- **Urban Ethnic Matrix Districts**-- Districts in this category are urban and very socioeconomically heterogeneous**.** They tend to encompass the country's most multiethnic neighborhoods and communities, but occasionally are mere agglomerations of diverse but internally homogeneous neighborhoods. In addition to including numerous districts in the country's largest cities, this category also includes inner suburban districts in highly multiethnic states such as California. A look at the statistics reveals that these districts include large percentages of both blacks and Hispanics, as well as large percentages of well-educated professionals. The economic landscape of these districts is also exceptionally diverse.

- **Yuppie Districts** -- Perhaps the most distinctive category of the nine, yuppie districts are found in two ostensibly different locales – upscale central neighborhoods within the country's large cities, and college towns. Yuppie districts are exemplified by extremely high levels of educational attainment, low percentages of family households, and low percentages of residents under the age of 18.
- **Middle-Class Suburban Districts –** This category includes districts reminiscent of the burgeoning American suburbs of the post-World War Two period. They tend to be found along the inner ring of large metropolitan areas or in the central neighborhoods of smaller cities. Districts in this category are largely urban and primarily (though not overwhelmingly) white. They are middle-of-the-road with respect to most of the economic and social variables that were included in the analysis.
- **Outer Suburban Districts –** These districts tend to be found on the outer reaches of large metropolitan areas. Because they are primarily located in the metropolitan fringes, outer suburban districts tend to have higher average scores on the metropolitanization index but also lower percentages of urban residents than do middle-class suburban districts. Not solely distinguishable from middle-class suburban districts on the basis of their location, outer suburban districts also evince higher percentages of family households and people with college degrees than their more densely-populated counterparts.
- **Upscale Suburban Districts –** This category of districts encompasses many of the country's most posh communities, including West Los Angeles, Chicago's North Shore, Westchester County, New York, Morris County, New Jersey, and others. Like yuppie

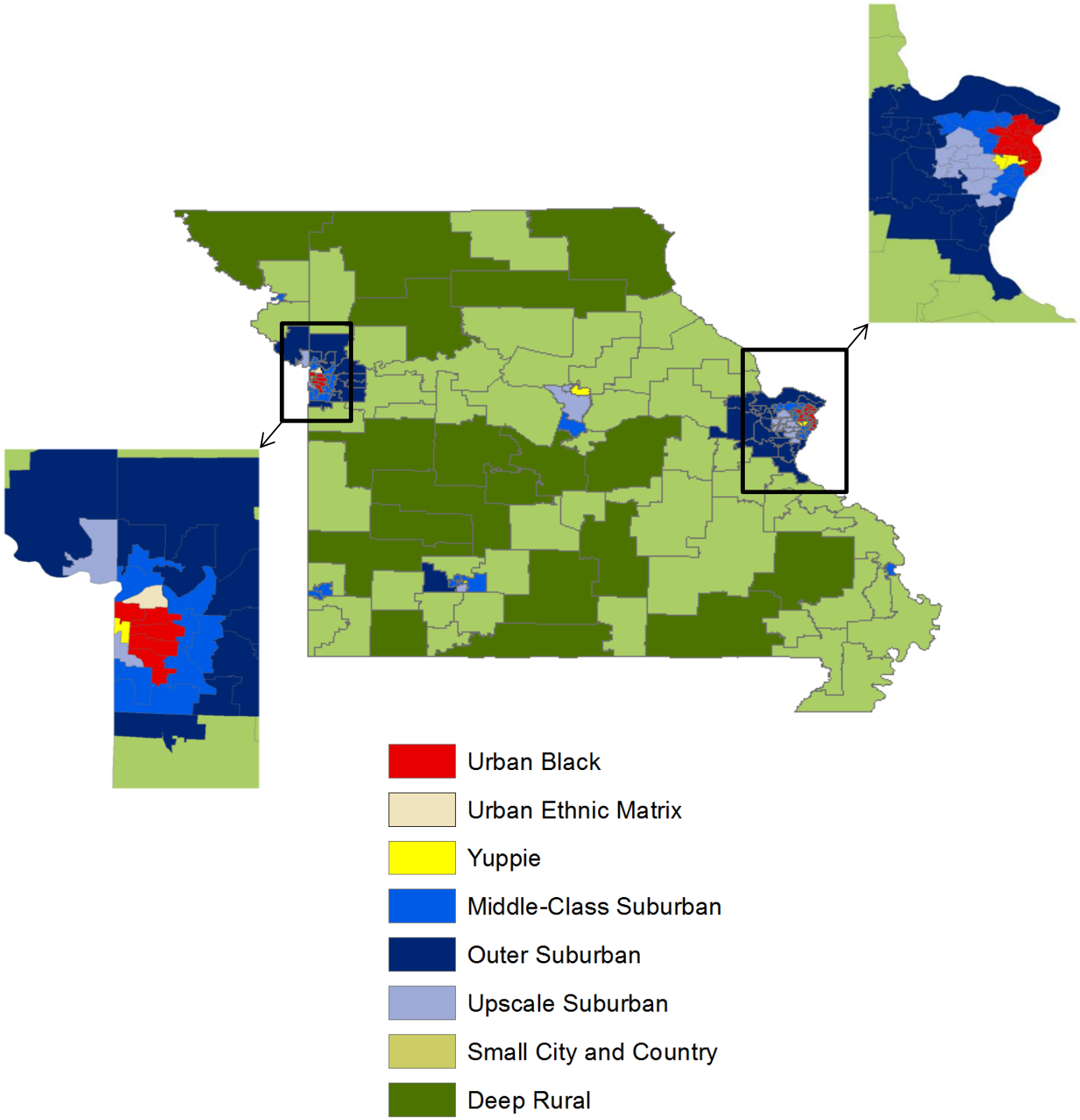
districts, upscale suburban districts exhibit high levels of educational attainment. However, they are distinguished from yuppie districts in exhibiting higher percentages of family households and residents under the age of 18.

- **Small City and Country Districts** – Easily the most common district category, small city and country districts tend to encompass a small central city and surrounding, mostly rural territory. As such, they exhibit very low percentages of urban residents and low values on the metropolitanization index. Small city and country districts share many of the same characteristics as outer suburban districts, but are less urban and well-educated as well as older.
- **Deep Rural Districts** -- The districts in this category are, in many respects, vestiges of America's largely agrarian past. They are overwhelmingly white and rural, but are also distinctive in a number of additional ways. For example, of the nine categories, deep rural districts have the highest percentages of residents over the age of 65, the lowest percentages of residents who speak a language other than English at home, and the highest percentage of self-employed residents.

So as to give readers a better sense of the locations of the different district categories, I present a series of maps of 2003-2012 Missouri legislative districts in Figure 2.3 (next page), color-coded according to their most likely class membership. Blown-up maps of the St. Louis and Kansas City metropolitan areas are presented on the right-hand and left-hand sides of the statewide map, respectively. Missouri is featured because it is a highly segregated state in which the political geography is demarcated especially clearly, though similar maps could, of course, be easily created for each of the additional sixteen

states under examination. One of the nine district categories (urban Hispanic) is not found in Missouri, and is thus absent from the maps.

Figure 2.3: Map of Missouri State House Districts, 2003-2012, Color-Coded According to Most Likely Latent Class Membership



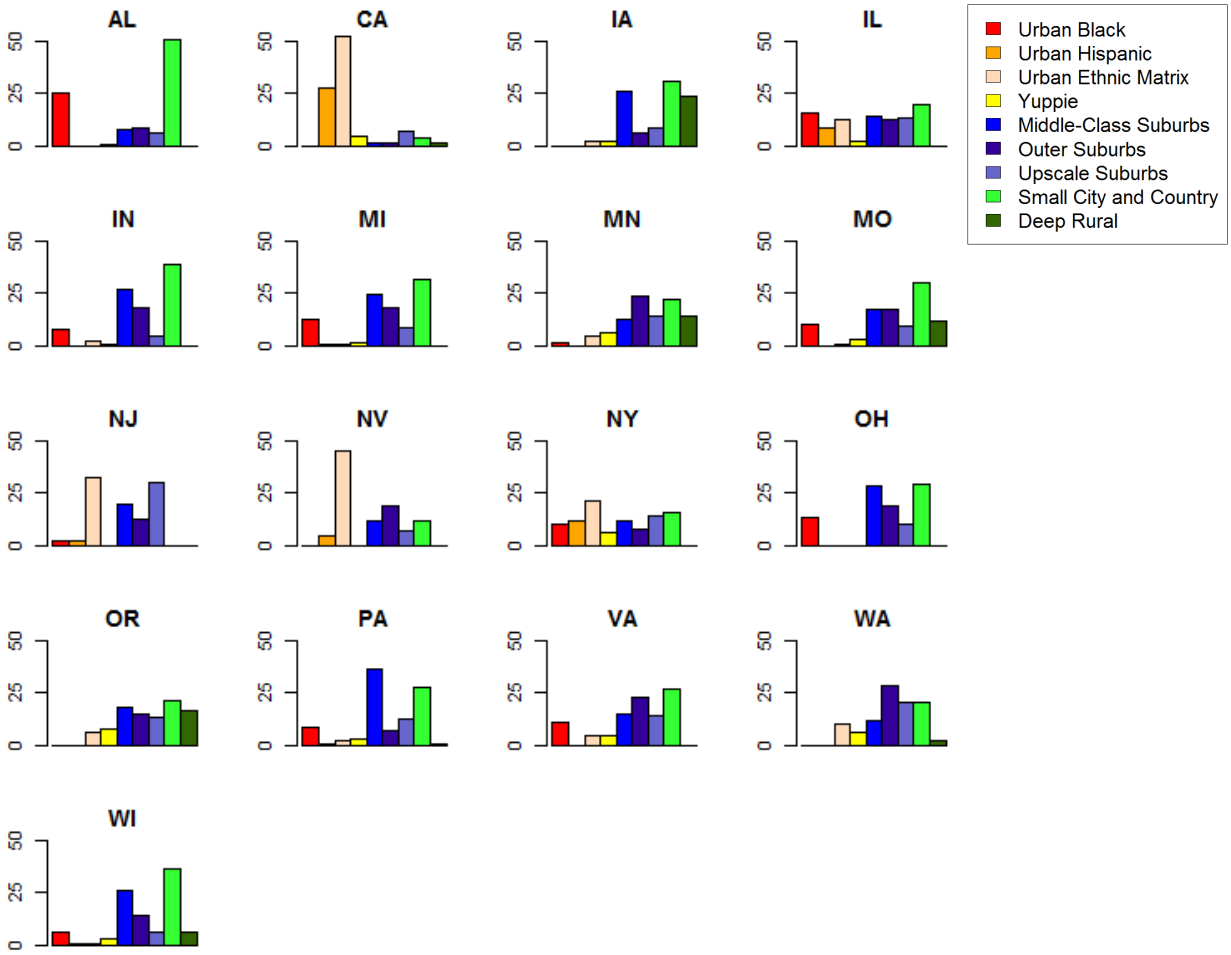
The maps clearly demonstrate that district classes are located in very different geographies. Urban black districts are overwhelmingly concentrated in the north side of the City of St. Louis as well as in central Kansas City. One urban ethnic matrix district can be found in central Kansas City as well. Yuppie districts encompass the affluent central neighborhoods of St. Louis and Kansas City; a single yuppie district can also be found in the center of the state, where Columbia (home of the state's flagship university) is located. Middle-class suburban districts are found directly to the west and east of the central cities of St. Louis and Kansas City; they tend to be surrounded by outer suburban districts. Upscale suburban district are primarily found directly east of the City of St. Louis. Small city and country districts are found along a strip ranging from the southeast corner of the state (known as its "boot heel") to the outer reaches of the St. Louis metropolitan area, as well as along another strip stretching across the midsection of the state from the St. Louis to Kansas City areas. Deep rural districts compose much of the rest of the state.

VARIATIONS IN THE PRESENCE OF DISTRICT CATEGORIES ACROSS CHAMBERS

The relative presence of district categories varies rather substantially across the seventeen chambers included in this study, as should be expected given the diverse demographic and geographical characteristics of the states to which they belong. Figure 2.4 (next page) presents the percentages of each of the nine district types within the lower

houses of the nine states under examination during the 2003-2012 years.[23] In examining the figure closely, it becomes clear that the overall demographic profile of a state is the most important (but not the only) factor explaining variation in the presence of district categories within a legislative chamber.

Figure 2.4: Proportions of Legislative District Latent Categories within State Legislative Lower Houses, 2003-2012



[23] Importantly, the distribution of district classes not only varies across individual states; it also varies across time. The effects of demographic changes and redistricting plans will manifest themselves in a different distribution of categories within chambers every ten years. Changes will be larger in states whose demographic profiles are rapidly shifting. Variations in the distribution of district categories between the two Census periods will be discussed extensively in Chapter Three.

In observing Figure 2.4, one can detect various groups of chambers whose distributions of district categories bear some resemblance. For example, the distributions of the Illinois House and New York Assembly look quite similar, in that both chambers exhibit relatively even percentages of all the district categories, with the important exceptions of deep rural districts (which account for less than 1% of the districts in both states). The exceptional diversity and relatively even distribution of district categories in the Illinois House and New York Assembly makes sense when one considers the qualities shared by the states associated with these two chambers. Illinois and New York are both defined by a large, socioeconomically diverse metropolitan area, but numerous small cities and rural communities can also be found within their boundaries.

The industrial Midwestern states of Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, and (to a lesser degree) Pennsylvania also resemble each other with respect to the distributions of district categories in their lower legislative chambers. The Ohio House provides the clearest example of the distributional pattern inherent in each of these states. Only five district categories are present in the Ohio House: urban black districts, middle-class suburban districts, outer suburban districts, upscale suburban districts, and small city and country districts.[24] While urban black districts predominate within Ohio's central cities and small city and country districts predominate outside its metropolitan areas, a more interesting pattern emerges within the state's suburban areas. In observing the distribution

[24] The lack of urban ethnic matrix districts or yuppie districts in the Ohio House does not mean that multiethnic neighborhoods or neighborhoods full of young, well-educated singles cannot be found in Ohio. While such neighborhoods are surely present in cities such as Cleveland and Columbus, they are not big enough to yield districts associated with these latent categories, particularly given that Ohio House districts are have rather large populations (see Table 2.1).

of the Ohio House's suburban district categories, one can see a stair-step pattern from left to right: middle-class suburban districts are the most common, outer suburban districts are fairly common, and upscale suburban districts are present but not ubiquitous. The same basic pattern exists, albeit in somewhat attenuated form, in the chambers of each of the other industrial Midwestern states.

Surprisingly, the Oregon House and Minnesota House also bear a certain resemblance in their distribution of district categories. Both chambers have above-average percentages of yuppie districts, upscale suburban districts, and deep rural districts as well as few or no urban black and urban Hispanic districts. These results make sense when one considers that both Oregon and Minnesota have relatively low percentages of racial and ethnic minority populations, relatively high percentages of well-educated populations, and fairly large rural populations to boot.

Three of the remaining chambers in the sample – the California Assembly, Nevada Assembly, and New Jersey Assembly – exhibit distributions that have a strikingly high percentage of urban ethnic matrix districts. Not coincidentally, the states to which these three chambers belong all have very high rates of racial and ethnic diversity. In California in particular, Hispanic communities are dispersed throughout the state;[25] as a result, districts in places like Fresno, Bakersfield, or the outer reaches of the San Diego metropolitan area, which would likely be categorized as middle-class or outer suburban suburban districts absent a large Hispanic population, are lumped into the urban ethnic matrix category instead.

[25] To be sure, Hispanic communities are far larger in some places than others.

Aside from overall racial/ethnic composition and the extent of geographical dispersion of racial/ethnic communities, another factor likely at play in creating a large number of urban ethnic matrix districts in California and New Jersey is district size. California's 38 million residents are divided into only eighty state assembly districts, thus making each 2003-2012 district the home of nearly 440,000 residents; similarly, New Jersey's nine million residents are divided into only 40 assembly districts, thereby creating 2003-2012 districts with a total population of around 216,000. Within districts of such a size, many racially and economically homogeneous communities exist that would likely be categorized differently if they constituted their own districts. The fact that legislative districts in California and New Jersey are so aggregated, and that both states are so diverse to begin with, goes a long way toward explaining why the proportions of ethnic matrix districts in the California and New Jersey Assemblies are so high.

VARIATIONS IN INTRA-CATEGORY HOMOGENEITY AND INTER-CATEGORY SEGREGATION

While the nine categories that emerged from the latent profile analysis were derived on the basis of the covariations between each pair of the twelve included outcome variables, the categories tend to be more strongly associated with values for some of the outcome variables than with others. To some degree, the extent to which the values of the demographic variables are segregated across categories is related to their initial dispersion. That is, if a variable has more dispersed values, distinct sets of those values are more easily isolated into different categories of observations. To get a sense of how the dispersion inherent in each of the demographic variables relates to the extent to which

the variables are useful in distinguishing among the latent categories, I present two barplots in Figures 2.5 and 2.6 (below and next page). Figure 2.5 shows each demographic variable's standard deviation value (since all of the variables are scaled from 0 to 100, their standard deviations are roughly comparable). As can be seen, the geographical variables (URBAN, METRO) exhibit the most dispersion in values, followed by the racial variables (BLACK, HISP) and the variables related to family structure and education (FAM, MAR, ENG, BA). The variables related to age structure (UNDER18, OVER65) and economic sector (PRIVSEC, SELFEMP) exhibit the least amount of dispersion.

Figure 2.5: Standard Deviations of Demographic Variables included in Latent Profile Analysis

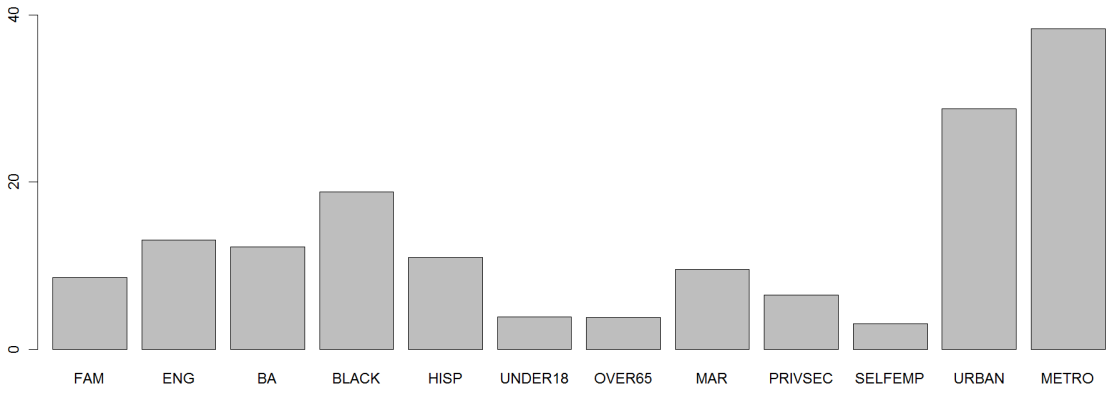


Figure 2.6: ANOVA F-Statistics Comparing Differences of Means across Latent Categories

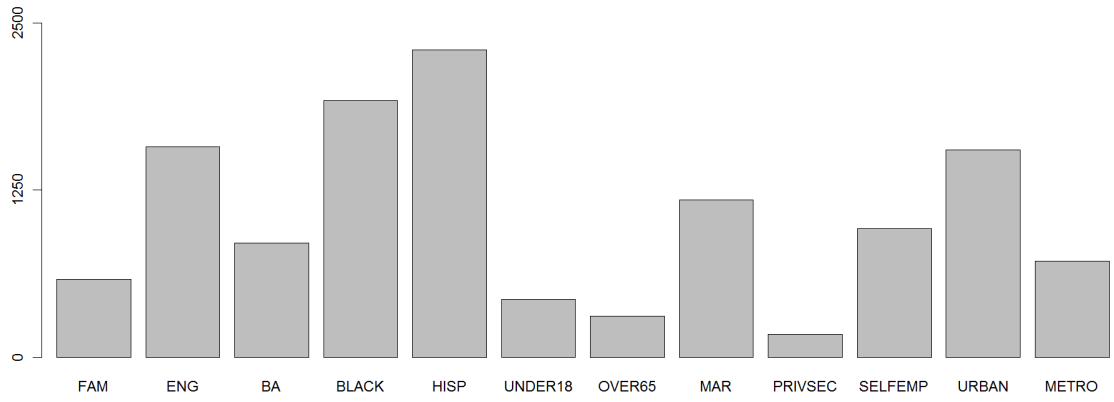
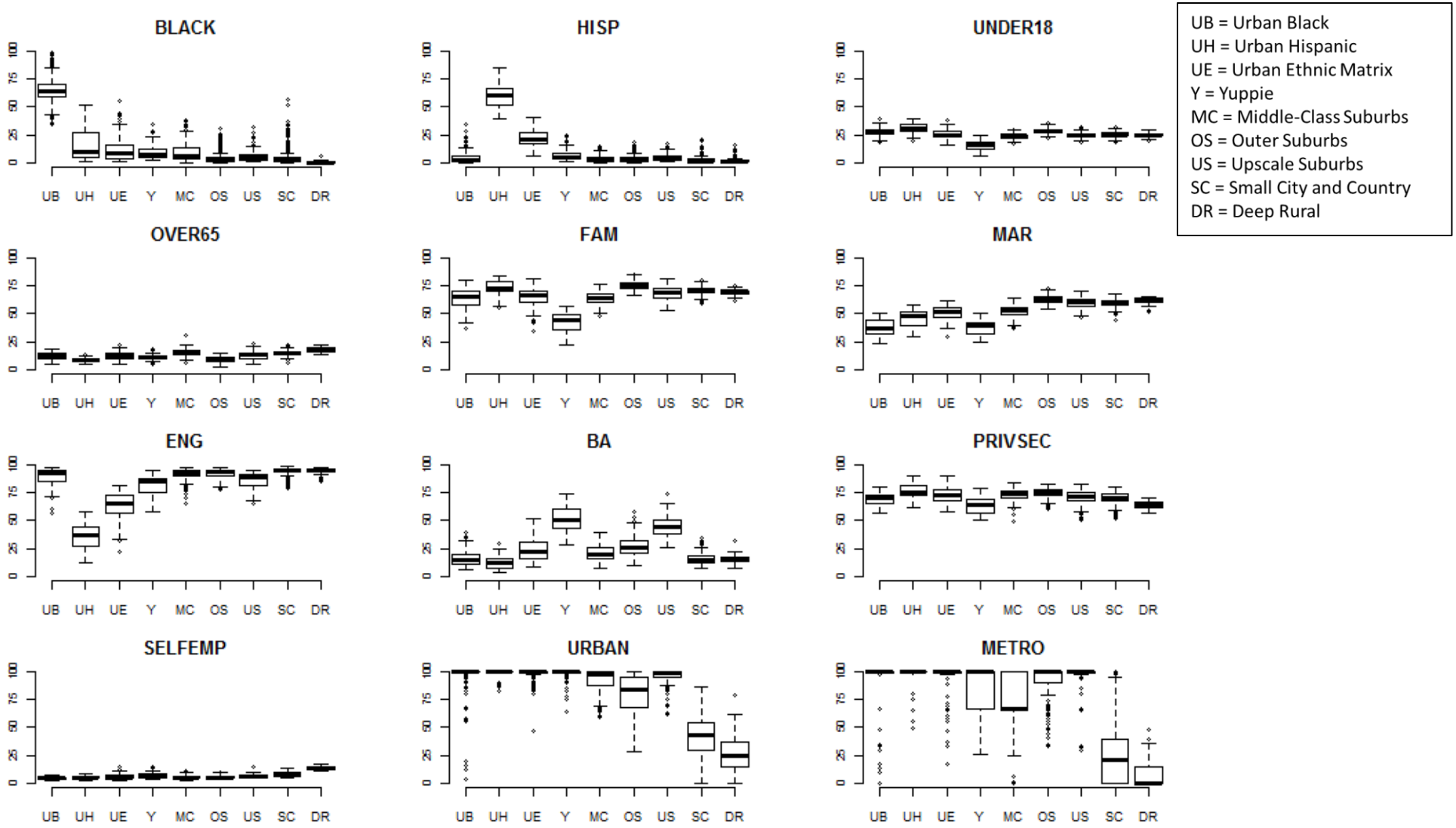


Figure 2.6, on the other hand, displays the value of the F-statistic for one-way ANOVA tests comparing means for the demographic variables among observations within each of the latent categories. The F-statistics indicate the extent to which observations within each of the categories exhibit distinct sets of values for the respective variables. A comparison of Figures 2.5 and 2.6 suggests that the initial spread of the variables and the segregation of their values across latent categories are related, but not perfectly so. Whereas the geographically-based variables (URBAN and METRO) evince the greatest dispersion, it is the values of the racial variables (BLACK and HISP) that are most segregated across the district classes. ENG is another variable whose segregation of values across district classes is higher than might be expected.

To get a better sense of which observed variables are more useful for distinguishing between latent categories and which ones are less so, as well as the ways in which the latent categories themselves vary in their internal coherence and external heterogeneity, I present boxplots of the values of observed variables for 2003-2012

districts in each latent category in Figure 2.7 (next page). Boxplots include a rectangular center representing the interquartile range of a given variable, “whiskers” representing more dispersed values, and dots representing outlier values. Each plot in figure 3 includes boxplots for the values of a single demographic variable. The tick marks below each boxplot indicates the latent category to which it corresponds (a legend linking the latent categories with their respective acronyms can be found to the right of the boxplots).

Figure 2.7: Boxplots for Demographic Values of Districts on the Basis of Most Likely Latent Class Membership



The first point to make is that, to varying degrees, each demographic variable can be used to isolate a handful of district categories that are distinct from the rest. For example, with respect to BLACK, urban black districts are clearly distinct from the other eight categories in terms of their high percentages of African-American residents. For HISP, the two distinctive categories are urban Hispanic and urban ethnic matrix. For UNDER18, they are yuppie and urban Hispanic. For OVER65, they are deep rural and middle-class suburbs, etc.

Additionally, when taken as a whole, the figure shows major differences across categories in the interquartile ranges for the racial (BLACK, HISP) and geographical (URBAN, METRO) variables, substantial interquartile range differences across categories for the variables related to family structure and education (FAM, ENG, BA), and smaller interquartile range differences across categories for the variables related to age and economic sector (UNDER18, OVER65, PRIVSEC, SELFEMP). These differences are strongly related to the overall dispersion of each of the demographic variables, as discussed above. It should be noted, however, that a certain degree of difference in the interquartile ranges across categories exists in all of the demographic variables that were included.

At the same time, the figure demonstrates that some of the demographic variables exhibit more widely dispersed values and/or higher numbers of outlier observations *within* categories. This is especially the case among the two geographical variables, URBAN and METRO. The large dispersion of values for these two variables, particularly among the two low-density district categories (small city and country and deep rural), is a

result of several things. First, because the other seven categories are composed of populations that are almost exclusively urban and located in metropolitan areas, the low-density categories inevitably take up the remaining, wide range of values for URBAN and METRO. Second, as described above, METRO is a scale based on aggregate data that, while important in its own right, does not correlate strongly with most of the other demographic variables. As a result, its role in the LCA is more peripheral. Indeed, there are many examples of districts that fit the archetype of "urban ethnic matrix" or "urban Hispanic" in most respects, but have fairly low values for METRO. These districts tend to be centered in small cities in western states like California, Nevada, and Washington. The populations of these districts are primarily urban and ethnically diverse (with large percentages of white and Hispanic residents), but they lie outside large metropolitan areas. It is these sorts of districts that account for the long whiskers and large numbers of outliers for the urban Hispanic and urban ethnic matrix categories in the METRO figure.

A different sort of pattern emerges with respect to the racial variables (BLACK and HISP). While the interquartile ranges of each of these variables are not particularly large across any of the categories, many of the categories display a large number of outlying values for them. The outer suburban and small city and country categories are particularly noteworthy in exhibiting many outlying observations for the BLACK variable. These observations closely resemble outer suburban or small city and country districts in most respects, but unlike most other districts in these categories, they contain high percentages of African Americans. As it turns out, nearly all of these outliers are districts located in Alabama and Virginia, the two Southern states in the sample. The

South is unique among American regions in containing large populations of African Americans living outside major metropolitan areas. Were additional Southern legislative chambers to have been included in the sample, it is almost certain that a latent category signifying low-density districts with large African-American populations would have emerged in the lower-order solutions of the LPA. Because additional Southern legislative chambers are not present in the sample, however, rural districts with large black populations compose such a small percentage of the sample that they do not emerge as a distinct category even among solutions that are far more complex than the nine-class solution upon which I settled.

Variables related to age, family structure, and economic sector evince little dispersion within nearly all district categories. Educational attainment, on the other hand, displays somewhat greater heterogeneity in some cases. Not surprisingly, those district categories that are defined to some degree by high socioeconomic standing (e.g. yuppie and upscale suburban district) evince less heterogeneity on the educational attainment variable.

THE NINE DISTRICT CATEGORIES AS CONTEXTUAL HEURISTICS

The nine-category solution that emerged from the LPA represents my efforts to better approximate legislator perceptions of the geographical constituency, a key goal of this study as discussed in Chapter One. There are a number of reasons for why the nine district categories better account for how legislators understand their whole districts than do conventional political science techniques, such as the use of individual district-level Census variables. First, the categories clearly situate legislative districts within particular

geographical locations, including densely-populated urban zones, inner-ring suburbs, the outer fringes of metropolitan areas, small cities and micropolitan areas, and rural areas. As discussed in Chapter One, district spatial setting constitutes one of the primary points of reference for legislators when they are asked to describe their constituencies. Second, the categories incorporate basic representations of the particular socioeconomic milieus that exist within legislative districts, another key element of legislator perceptions. Diverse interactions among racial, social, and economic variables are reflected in the differences among categories such as black, yuppie, and urban ethnic matrix, or middle-class suburban and upscale suburban, despite the fact that these sets of categories are often found in the same general locations.

Of course, a considerable distance remains between the nine-class solution and the "true" understandings that legislators have of their geographical constituencies. This is the case for a number of reasons, but most crucially, because it is impossible to arrive at the reality of legislator perceptions based purely upon demographic and geographical data, given the complex cognitive biases that affect all legislators. Nevertheless, when the evidence presented in the introductory chapter is considered, there is much reason to believe that the nine-fold categorization scheme comes closer than extant approaches to accounting for how legislators perceive their districts, particularly in relation to those represented by their colleagues. This is because the categorization scheme simplifies much demographic data into a set of spatial contexts that, based on the findings of Fenno, Jewell, and Smith, are likely to be recognizable to most legislators as they consider how the communities they represent compare with the overall geographical profiles of their

states. These categories thus serve as valuable proxies for the heuristics that legislators use when they make important decisions such as how loyal they should be to their party leaders, which of their colleagues they should form alliances with, what sorts of issues they should promote, and others.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter has been to present the quantitative categorization that will form the basis of much of the rest of the dissertation. The nine district categories that were introduced in this chapter will serve as the primary vehicles of analysis in each of the remaining empirical chapters of the dissertation. In Chapter Three, I will use the categorical scheme to consider complex questions regarding the interplay between demographic and electoral trends in influencing changes in partisan representation within the seventeen state legislative chambers. In Chapters Four and Five, the focus will shift from partisan outcomes to legislative outcomes. The nine district categories will serve as independent variables in the examination of questions regarding legislative polarization and the formation of distinct policy coalitions.

Chapter Three: The Changing Geographical Foundations of State Legislative Parties, 1993-2012

In Chapter Two, I described the basic aspects of the quantitative typology of state legislative districts that is at the center of this dissertation, including the statistical model used to develop the typology, the descriptions of the district categories, and how the categories vary in terms of their internal coherence with respect to important demographic variables. In Chapter Three, I take the nine-category solution upon which I settled as the basis for a detailed exploration of the ways in which demographic and electoral trends have interacted to impact the social foundations of state legislative parties over the nineteen-year period between 1993 and 2012. Because the topic at hand is highly multifaceted, I proceed by examining a series of individual questions that can be thought of as its constituent elements. These questions are as follows: 1) how has demographic change altered the distribution of the nine district classes between 1993 and 2011?; 2) how have the political alignments of different categories of legislative districts changed over the past several decades?; 3) to what extent do the political alignments of the district categories over the 1993-2011 period vary by region?; 4) how have demographic changes and electoral changes come together in the form of the district categories to influence trends in party control of state legislative chambers?

When considered collectively, the answers to these four questions suggest that the two major forces bearing upon the social foundations of contemporary state legislative politics – changes in the relative prevalence of the district categories and changes in the categories' electoral characteristics – have been moving in opposite directions. While the

former have largely worked to the benefit of Democrats (since the district categories that have grown in prevalence usually elect Democrats), the latter have worked to the benefit of Republicans (since the district categories that have changed their political orientations have moved in the Republicans' direction). For a variety of reasons, however, the influence of electoral changes over the past twenty years has been much more substantial than that of demographic changes. This observation goes a long way in explaining Republican ascendance in state legislatures across the country.

Prior to presenting the empirical results of this chapter, I explore what has already been written about the respective roles played by demographic trends and electoral changes in altering the constituency bases of state legislative parties across time. I then show how these two processes can be jointly studied through the district categorization scheme advanced in this work. Because it provides a unique vantage point through which to examine a complex array of social and political trends, the district categorization scheme helps to reveal some fundamental realities obscured by a focus on smaller patterns.

THE CONSTITUENCY BASES OF STATE LEGISLATIVE PARTIES: TWO CAUSES OF CHANGE

No one with a basic understanding of American politics would dispute the notion that the sorts of constituencies represented by Republicans differ from the sorts of constituencies represented by Democrats in America's legislative bodies. It is, for example, a truism of American politics that Republicans in the contemporary U.S. tend to represent constituencies that are whiter, wealthier, and more sparsely-populated than

Democrats. Nor would anyone with some level of knowledge dispute the notion that over time, as American society and politics evolve, so do the constituency bases of legislative parties. As discussed briefly in the introduction, scholars have pointed to longitudinal changes in the constituency bases of congressional parties as key factors influencing the development of America's national legislature (Stonecash, Brewer, and Marini 2003; Brady and Althoff 1974; Brady and Stewart 1982). It seems likely that similar processes affect the course of legislative politics in the states. An important first step in determining the impact of changes in the constituency bases of state legislative parties is to get a sense of how those changes have come about.

Among the possible factors that might influence how the social foundations of state legislative parties differ, two stand out as of utmost importance. The first of these factors involves transformations in the overall demographic and geographical profiles of states. Political scientists have long observed that changes in the demographic composition of the American electorate have large consequences for the nature of American politics over time. One of the most important ways in which demographic changes influence national politics is by altering the social ingredients that national parties have at their disposal as they seek to assemble majority coalitions (Petrocik 1987; Andersen 1979). Several notable works of scholarship have shed further light on this process by examining it at the state level, showing how large-scale demographic changes affect the social profiles of individual state electorates in highly diverse ways (Gimpel 1999; Gimpel and Shuknecht 2004). Moreover, when changes in the demographic composition of sub-state electorates occur in a geographically uneven manner, they

enhance the possibility that the legislative district boundaries into which states are partitioned will encompass areas that are more sociologically distinct from each other than they were before.

Political demographers have devoted much attention to exploring the demographic trends that have altered American politics (and, by extension, the politics of individual states) during the time period covered in this study. In particular, they have pointed to the growth of particular populations, most notably Hispanics (Frey 2008; Judis and Teixeira 2002; DeSipio 1996), college-educated professionals (Abramowitz and Teixeira 2008), and childless adults (Smith 2008), and the decline of other populations, including the white working class (Teixeira and Rogers 2000; Abramowitz and Teixeira 2008) and married adults (Smith 2008), as developments of large consequence. Importantly, each of these developments has predominately occurred across state boundaries, rather than neatly overlapping with them. Moreover, most of these changes have tended to be concentrated in particular areas rather than being dispersed evenly across space, the effect of which has generally been to make legislative districts more rather than less uneven in their constituency characteristics. Similar to the work of political demographers, population geographers have pointed to important, explicitly spatial trends affecting American communities and jurisdictions, many of which have had major ramifications for party politics in America. These include the infilling of urban cores by recent immigrants and the concomitant outflow of native-born Americans from these areas (Frey 1996), the densification and urbanization of inner-ring suburbs

surrounding large cities (Orfield 1997, 2003; Lang, Sanchez, and Berube 2008), the emergence of "exurban" communities along the outer fringes of cities, and others.

In addition to changes in the demographic characteristics of the American population, the other major factor influencing the social bases of legislative parties involves changes in the political characteristics of social groups within the American electorate. The process by which social groups alter their collective voting behavior in American politics has been the focal point of a large and detailed literature within political science. The specific controversies in which scholars writing in this area have been engulfed need not detain us here. Instead, it should suffice to say that, their disagreements aside, most scholars have come to accept that gradual, long-term changes in the partisan affiliations of social groups – akin to what V.O. Key called "secular realignment" – are the primary mechanism by which partisan change in contemporary American politics occurs (Brewer and Stonecash 2008; Burnham 2010; Mayhew 2002). As the partisan alignments of individual social groups change gradually, so do the overall social-group profiles of the political parties. The notion that shifts in the political preferences of social groups usually occur gradually comports well with this study's focus on cumulative effects across a period of time lasting roughly two decades.

Because changes in the social composition of the electorate and changes in the party alignments of social groups tend to occur at a more-or-less continuous rate, it is difficult to empirically disentangle the effect of one from that of the other. Thus, much recent scholarship on the growing importance of the Latino vote has emphasized both their emerging status as a social group that is politically up-for-grabs, as well as their

rapid growth within the United States. Analyses examining recent changes in voting patterns among working-class whites (Bartels 2006; Abramowitz and Teixeira 2008; Frank 2004), college-educated professionals (Brewer and Stonecash 2008), suburbanites (Lang, Sanchez, and Berube 2008; Gainsborough 2001; Oliver 2001), rural voters (Gimpel and Karnes 2006), among others, have also sought to emphasize the importance of demographic trends alongside electoral ones. Despite the difficulties in distinguishing their effects, however, it is clear that demographic growth and partisan change are distinct processes affecting the social foundations of legislative parties.

USING THE DISTRICT CATEGORIES TO UNDERSTAND THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN POPULATION CHANGE AND ELECTORAL CHANGE

In considering all of the different ways in which demographic and electoral changes can influence the social bases of legislative parties, we are faced with a bewildering assortment of possible individual influences, not to mention a far larger assortment of interactive ones. Comprehensively describing how all of these influences work together to shape changes in legislative constituencies would therefore ostensibly seem to be a truly daunting task, even if the focus were on only one legislative institution. Perhaps this is one reason for why extant studies that have sought to examine changing constituency bases have almost always focused on no more than a handful of demographic variables.

The district categorization scheme, on the other hand, provides an opportunity to simplify the incredibly complex demographic and electoral realities alluded to earlier by situating them within nine geographical contexts. Stated differently, we can understand

how the manifold demographic and electoral trends in American society converge to influence the constituency bases of state legislative parties by viewing them as *acting through* the nine district categories. Doing so allows us to consider the respective influences of demographic trends, electoral trends, and their interactions in fairly eye-opening ways. Demographic changes can be viewed as manifesting themselves in changes in the relative presence of district categories between Census periods. Recall that the sample of legislative districts includes an equal number of districts from the same seventeen chambers for the 1990s and 2000s. Thus, when states experience growth in the sizes of particular social groups or a change in the geographical distribution of their populations, these developments will express themselves through changes in the distribution of district categories within their legislative chambers. Likewise, when particular social groups or communities adjust their voting patterns, these changes will manifest themselves in particular district categories becoming more or less likely to be represented by one of the two political parties.

To be sure, the approach to understanding the roles of demographic and electoral change described here is not a perfect solution to the challenges of accounting for demographic and electoral trends. For one thing, because the U.S. Census only collects detailed demographic data once every ten years, it is impossible to measure continuous change in the relative prevalence of district categories. Instead, it is only possible to evaluate the presence of the respective classes of districts once every ten years, after decennial Censuses are conducted and redistricting plans subsequently emerge. Additionally, demographic changes in district population do not track perfectly with

changes in the composition of district electorates, so it would be misleading to attribute changes in the electoral characteristics of district categories to changes in the electoral characteristics of any particular demographic or social group. These issues notwithstanding, the approach nonetheless provides a uniquely comprehensive way to examine changes in the kinds of geographical constituencies represented by Democrats and Republicans.

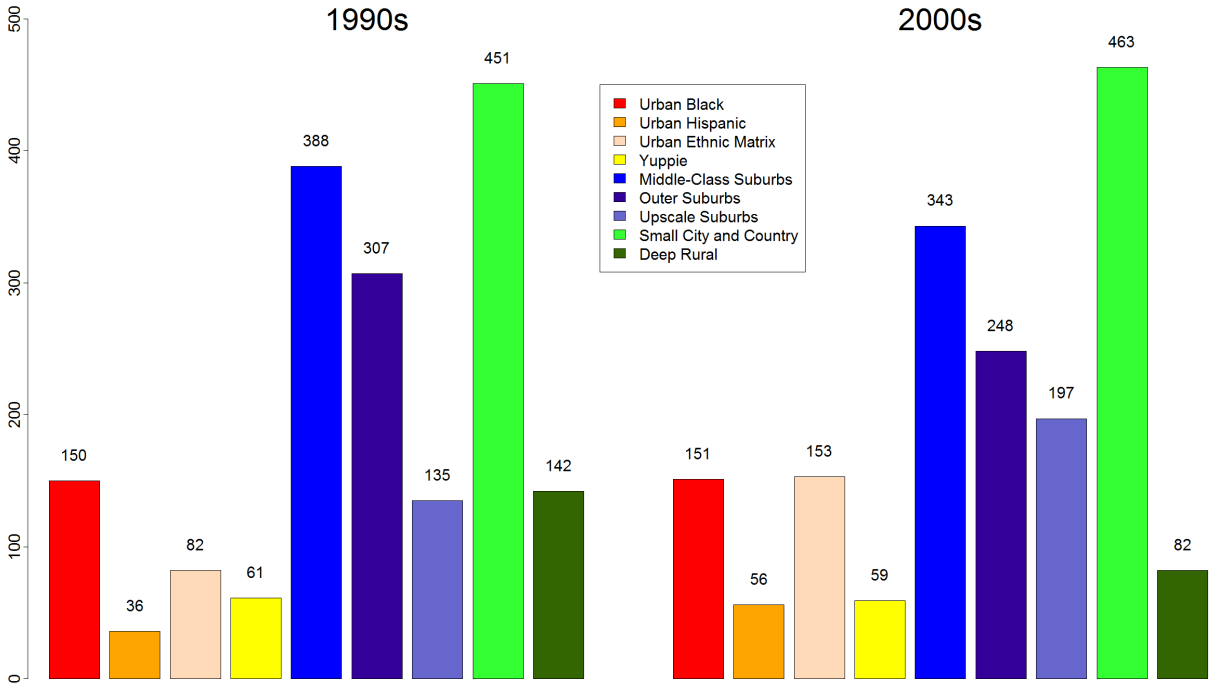
Before launching into the empirical findings, it is important to reiterate how the conceptual move at the heart of this dissertation will influence the way the results of this chapter are reported. In keeping with the focus on the nine geographical contexts rather than the demographic variables that are their empirical manifestations, the explanations of this chapter's findings will emphasize legislative parties' geographical bases (i.e., the geographical contexts upon which they rely as they attempt to secure legislative majorities) rather than their social or demographic bases. While social groups and demographic variables will be referenced in order to provide valuable explanation to the trends that are found, an effort will be made to emphasize that the findings of this chapter (and this dissertation) ultimately pertain to the geographical contexts at hand, not to the demographic variables that are associated with them.

DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES AND THE PRESENCE OF DISTRICT CATEGORIES

Here, I examine the ways in which demographic changes have impacted the presence of the nine district categories among the observations in the dataset between the 1990s and the 2000s. In Figure 3.1 (next page), I present data comparing the most likely categorical memberships of the 1,752 districts in my sample from the 1990s to the most

likely categorical memberships of the 1,752 districts in my sample from the 2000s. As can be seen, district categories whose numbers increase substantially between 1990 and 2000 include urban ethnic matrix districts, urban Hispanic districts, and upscale suburban districts; district classes whose number decrease substantially include middle-class suburban, outer suburban, and deep rural districts.

Figure 3.1: Most Likely Categorical Memberships of Legislative Districts from the 1990s and 2000s



Several important socioeconomic changes and population movements can quickly be recognized to be at work in the shifts in the prevalence of the district categories. For example, scholars have written about the impact of demographic shifts upon the character of many inner-ring suburbs throughout the country in recent decades. As these communities have simultaneously become more racially diverse and densely-populated,

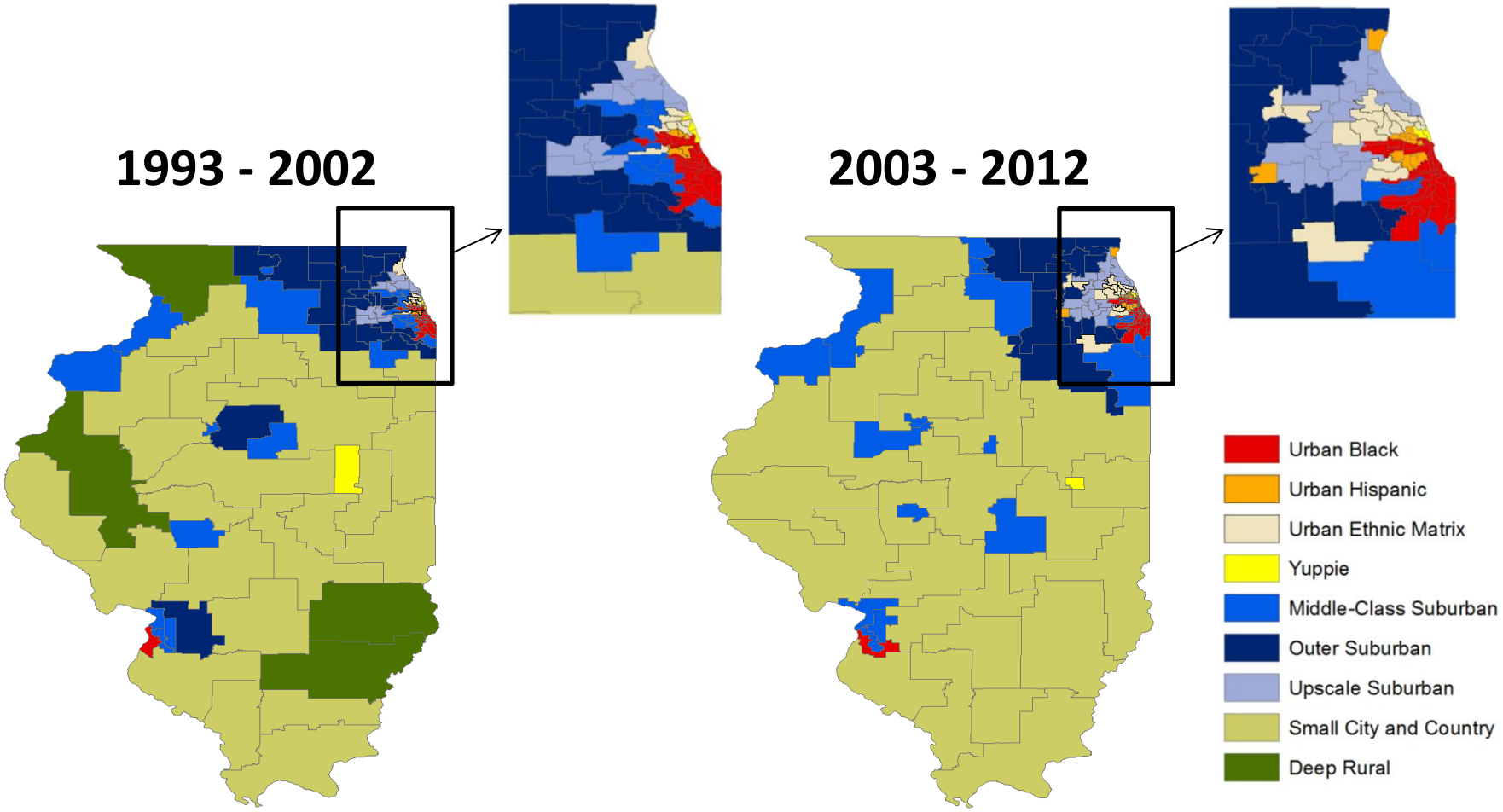
they have come to more closely resemble their metropolitan area's central urban core (Hanlon et al. 2006; Orfield 2002). This pattern almost certainly lies behind the dramatic increase in urban ethnic matrix districts and the concomitant decrease in middle-class suburban districts. In a similar vein, the rapid growth of Hispanic populations within longstanding Hispanic urban neighborhoods largely explains the increased presence of urban Hispanic districts. Another well-known trend affecting metropolitan areas throughout the country has been the growth and increased geographical clustering of well-educated professionals (Moretti 2012; Berry and Glaesar 2005). This phenomenon is likely at work in the transformation of areas constituting middle-class suburban and outer-suburban districts in the 1990s into areas constituting upscale suburban districts in the 2000s.

Of all the district categories, the one that experiences the most significant decline between the 1990s and the 2000s (in terms of sheer numbers but especially in terms of relative prevalence) is that of deep rural districts. This trend is, of course, directly related to the longstanding and ongoing decline in the percentage of Americans living in rural areas. In many cases, the boundaries of what had been deep rural districts in the 1990s were expanded to include small portions of metropolitan areas in the 2000s so that these districts could achieve population parity with other districts in their states. The end result was that many areas constituting deep rural districts in the 1990s became areas constituting small city and country districts in the 2000s, thereby accounting for the modest increase in prevalence of small city and country districts between the two decades. Still, when their numbers are combined and compared to those of other

categories across the two time periods, deep rural and small city and country districts are clearly net losers and would show an even greater decrease if the results of the 2010 Census were factored into the analysis. It is abundantly clear that the image of America as a country whose population is spread out across small cities and towns dotting an expansive landscape is largely antiquated and obsolete.

To enhance readers' understanding of the demographic trends discussed above, I present maps of Illinois State House Districts in the 1990s and 2000s on the next page. These maps are instructive because, when considered side-by-side, they indicate precisely where changes in district category membership have occurred and illuminate the processes that contribute to these changes. A close examination of the zoomed-in maps of the Chicago area (where the bulk of the state's population is found) reveals that the number of urban ethnic matrix districts in the Illinois House skyrocketed between the 1990s and 2000s in large part because districts belonging to this category have increasingly emerged outside the city limits of Chicago. As Chicago Hispanics have increasingly laid down roots in the city's suburbs, they have effectively transformed many legislative districts in these areas into urban ethnic matrix districts. Within the city limits, on the other hand, the number of urban Hispanic districts has expanded as well. Finally, examining the vast bulk of land area in Illinois outside Chicagoland reveals that all of the deep rural districts in the 1990s transformed into small city and country districts in the 2000s, as was discussed in the previous paragraph. In the 2000s, not a single deep rural district remains in the Illinois House.

Figure 3.2: Most Likely Latent Class Membership of Illinois State House Districts, 1993-2002 and 2003-2012



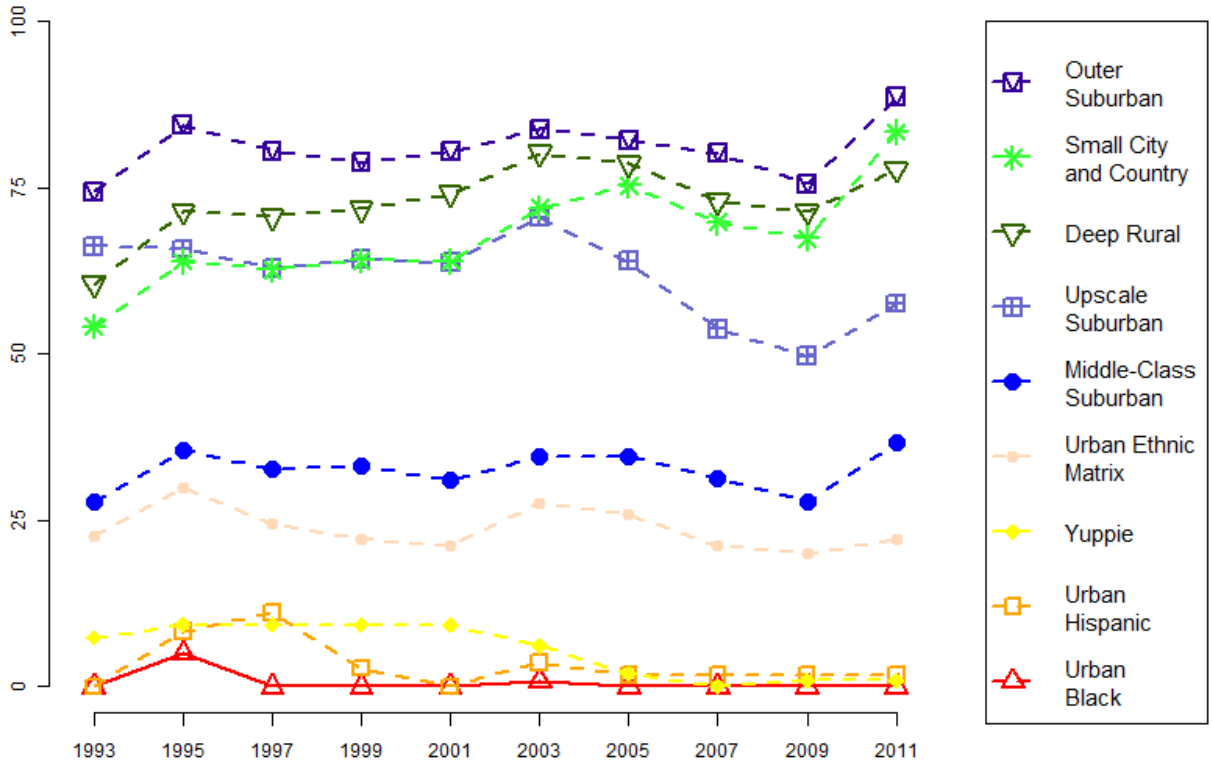
CHANGES IN THE PARTISAN REPRESENTATION OF DISTRICT CATEGORIES

Thus far, I have discussed how the prevalence of the nine district categories changed between 1990s and 2000s, linking these changes to various demographic shifts in American society during this time period. I now turn to the electoral dimension and inquire, what are the political characteristics of the nine district categories, and how have these changed since 1993?

Figure 3.3 (next page) shows the percentage of districts within each category represented by Republicans between 1993 and 2012.[26] As can be seen, the district categories vary dramatically in their tendencies to be represented by one party or the other. But while the overall political orientation of some of these categories has gone mostly unchanged over the past twenty years, other categories have undergone a dramatic political transformation. A proper accounting of this chart needs to consider what has happened with each of the nine categories.

[26] Because their 1990s redistricting plans were not implemented until 1994, the Alabama House and Minnesota House are not included in Figure 3.3. In the New Jersey House and Washington House, two legislators are elected from each individual district. Each of these districts is given the same weight as districts from all other chambers in the figure. In cases where both legislators representing a district are Republicans, the district is counted as being represented by one Republican legislator. In cases where one of the two legislators representing a district in these chambers is a Republican, the district is counted as being represented by one-half of a Republican legislator.

Figure 3.3: Percentage of Districts Within Each Latent Category Represented by Republicans, 1993-2011



Throughout the period of time at hand, the four district categories least likely to be represented by Republicans have been three of the four urban district categories: urban black, urban Hispanic, and yuppie. As the figure shows, the political orientations of districts belonging to these categories have largely gone unchanged, with a modest uptick in Republican representation among all three categories following the 1994 elections reversing itself by the late 1990s. Indeed, by the end of the first decade of the 21st century, a smaller percentage of districts within each of these categories is represented by Republicans than was the case in 1993.

Districts belonging to the fourth urban district category – urban ethnic matrix districts – consistently display a higher likelihood of being represented by Republicans.

In the 1990s, most urban ethnic matrix districts sending Republicans to statehouses were located in California, either in the medium-sized cities of the Central Valley or within the vast swathe of densely-populated territory stretching east from the City of Los Angeles (locally known as the "Inland Empire"). During the 2000s, the number of urban ethnic matrix districts grew substantially and so did the number of such districts represented by Republicans. New Republican-leaning urban ethnic matrix districts could be found in sections of the Chicago, New York, and Seattle metropolitan areas. The overall percentage of such districts represented by Republicans did not increase, however; in fact, the trendline for Republican representation of urban ethnic matrix districts in Figure 3.3 is remarkably flat.

In comparison with the urban district categories, the suburban and low-density district categories exhibit much greater rates of overall change in their electoral characteristics over the course of the 1990s and 2000s. For two of these district categories – upscale suburban districts and middle-class suburban districts – the overall change between 1993 and 2011 is substantial though probably not large enough to be considered transformative. With respect to upscale suburban districts, the trendline in Republican representation is flat throughout the 1990s but jumps slightly in 2003 – an increase likely due to the combination of the effects of redistricting and the political climate of the 2002 elections. Between 2003 and 2009, however, upscale suburban districts experience a large and continuous drop in Republican representation, a pattern that can be explained as the outcome of growing Democratic support among well-educated, affluent whites during the latter years of the George W. Bush presidency (see, e.g., Brewer and Stonecash

2008). Republicans nonetheless manage to recover in some upscale suburban districts during the 2010 elections, and consequently the overall net gain for Democrats in representation of this category between 1993 and 2011 is only 9%. Middle-class suburban districts, on the other hand, display a modest net gain in Republican representation between 1993 and 2011. This gain occurs almost entirely at the beginning and end of this study's time frame (i.e., as a result of the 1994 and 2010 elections); levels of Republican representation of middle-class suburban districts are fairly steady in the interim.

By far the largest increases in Republican representation between 1993 and 2011 occur among the three remaining district classes – outer suburban, small city and country, and deep rural districts. At the inception of this study's time frame, outer suburban districts are well ahead of any other district category in terms of Republican representation. They manage to stay on top throughout the 1990s and 2000s, their rates of Republican representation rising from 74% in 1993 to 88% in 2011. Small city and country districts and deep rural districts, on the other hand, transition from being slightly more likely to be represented by Republicans in 1993 (54% and 61%, respectively) to being solidly Republican by 2011 (83% and 78%, respectively). The 29% increase in Republican representation among small city and country districts is especially noteworthy, both because of the sheer size of the increase as well as because of the numerical importance of this district category. Whereas in the early 1990s small city and country districts were evenly divided between the parties in terms of partisan

representation, by the early 2010s they have become the bedrocks of Republican state legislative caucuses while being practically non-existent within Democratic caucuses.

A close examination of Figure 3.3 reveals that much of the increase in Republican representation for the small city and country and deep rural categories occurred as a result of the 1994 and 2010 elections, both of which were watershed years for the Republican Party at the federal and state level. Not all of the increase in Republican representation of districts within these three categories can be attributed to these two elections, however. In particular, the figure shows that these categories experienced increases in GOP representation during the late 1990s and early 2000s as well.

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES IN TRENDS OF PARTISAN REPRESENTATION

To reiterate, the crux of the findings of the previous section is that, while most of the nine district categories experienced either no significant change or fairly modest change in partisan representation between 1993 and 2011, two categories in particular – small city and country districts and deep rural districts – experienced a large-scale increase in Republican representation. A logical question to ask next is whether these overall trends mask significant regional differences. For example, Myers (2013) provides strong evidence that the partisan realignment of the American South that began in the 1950s and 1960s did not end in the 1990s, as some have suggested, but instead continued apace in new locales (primarily rural areas and small cities rather than the suburbs of large metropolitan areas, which had already become heavily Republican). One possibility, then, is that the large-scale changes in partisan representation among small city and country districts that were documented in the previous section are not reflective

of national patterns, but are instead the result of partisan changes that occurred exclusively in the American South. While this possibility initially seems unlikely, since only two of the seventeen chambers in the analysis are from Southern states, it cannot be dismissed out of hand. It is also possible that the small overall declines in Republican representation among middle-class suburban and upscale suburban districts obscure regional differences between the country's coastal regions and its inner regions in representation of these two categories.

The notion that patterns of partisan representation among the respective district categories might differ across the country's regions is to some degree in tension with an important premise of this dissertation, *viz.* that microgeographical, sub-state cleavages are affecting the country in roughly the same way across regions. To the extent this is true, we should see a convergence across regions in levels of Republican representation for each of the district categories. Conversely, a divergence across regions in levels of Republican representation for each of the district categories would constitute evidence of an interaction between microgeographical (i.e., sub-state) cleavages and macrogeographical (i.e., supra-state) cleavages in the emerging geography of state legislative representation.

To examine regional differences in patterns of partisan representation of the district categories, I separated the seventeen legislative chambers in my analysis into five groups on the basis of the states to which they belong. Table 3.1 (next page) displays information about each of the regional groups, including the chambers constituting them and the total number of districts in each group. It is important to point out that the regions

are not even in terms of their overall contribution to the sample of districts. Due to the number of chambers within them and the number of districts per chamber, some regions contribute far more districts than others.

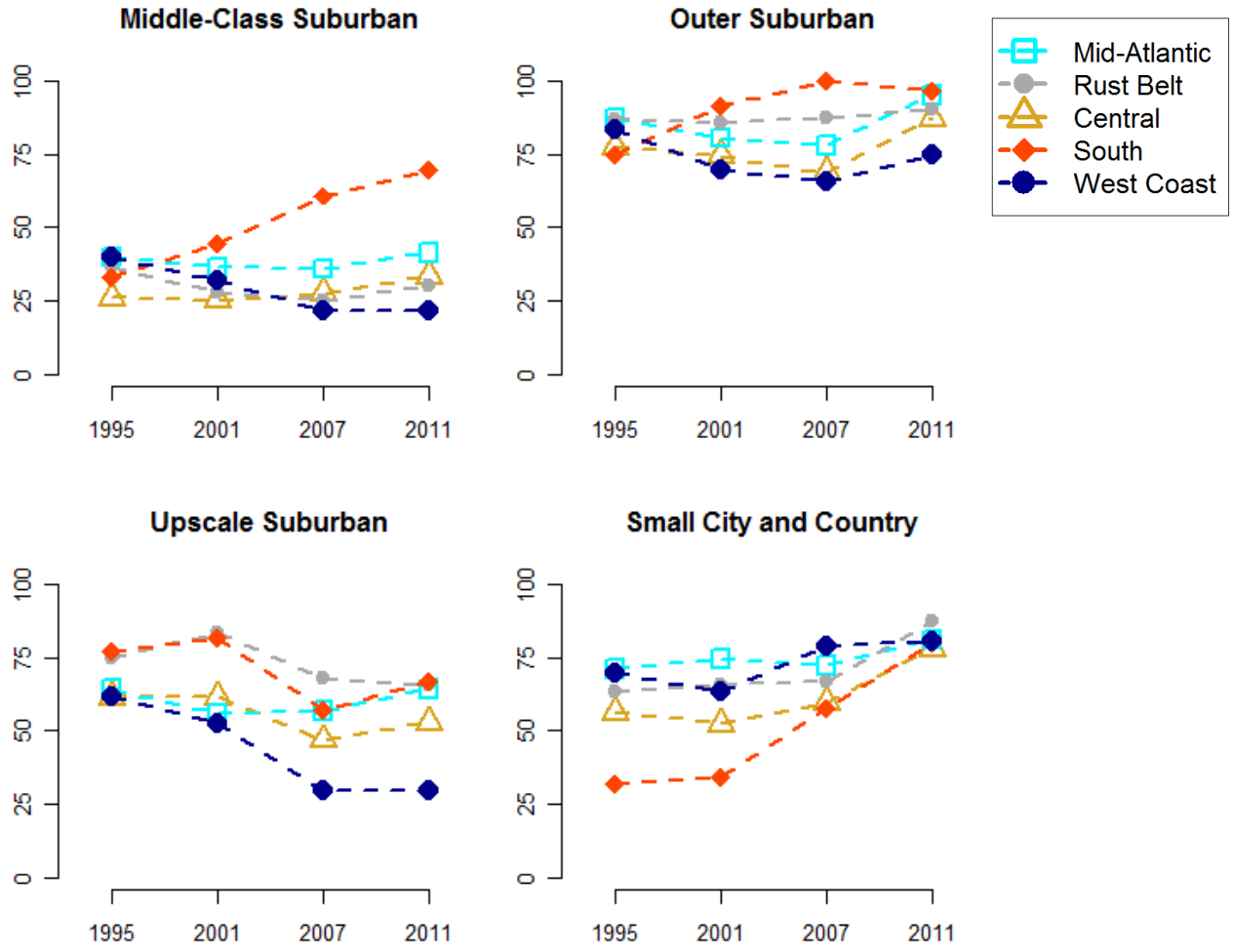
Table 3.1: Descriptive Statistics on Regional Groups

Region	Chambers	Number of Districts
Mid-Atlantic	New Jersey Assembly New York Assembly Pennsylvania House	786 (393 for each decade)
Rust Belt	Illinois House Indiana House Michigan House Ohio House	854 (427 for each decade)
Central	Iowa House Minnesota House Missouri House Wisconsin Assembly	992 (496 for each decade)
South	Alabama House Virginia House	410 (205 for each decade)
West Coast	California Assembly Nevada Assembly Oregon House Washington House	462 (231 for each decade)

Figure 3.4 (next page) shows how partisan representation of the four largest district categories (middle-class suburban districts, outer suburban districts, upscale suburban districts, and small city and country districts) has varied across the regions during four time points (1995, 2001, 2007, and 2011).[27] It shows evidence in favor of regional divergence in some cases and regional convergence in others. As will be explained, however, the strongest evidence is that in favor of regional convergence.

[27] Figures for the other five categories are not included because at least one region lacks a sufficiently large sample of districts belonging to these categories.

Figure 3.4: Regional Breakdowns of Percentages of District Categories Represented by Republicans, 1995-2011



The best examples of regional divergence can be seen in the figures for the middle-class suburban and upscale suburban district categories. In 1995, the percentage of middle-class suburban districts that are represented by Republicans ranges from 26% in the Central region to 40% in the West Coast region. Between 1995 and 2011, the percentage of such districts represented by Republicans dips somewhat in three of the five regions (Rust Belt, Central, and West Coast) but rises dramatically in the South.

With respect to upscale suburban districts, four of the five regional categories display a net decline in Republican representation between 1995 and 2011 (the percentage of upscale suburban districts in the mid-Atlantic region that are represented by Republicans is largely constant throughout the time period), but the decline in the West Coast is far larger than in the other three regions.

Caution is warranted, however, in inferring too much about regional divergence from the figures for middle-class suburban and upscale suburban districts. In both cases, results for the aberrant regions (i.e., the South for middle-class suburban districts, the West Coast for upscale suburban districts) are based on small sample sizes. There are only 18 middle-class suburban districts from the two Southern state legislative chambers for the 1990s and 23 such districts for the 2000s. Consequently, the large increase in the percentage of Southern middle-class suburban districts represented by Republicans is the result of a swing of only about eight districts between 1995 and 2011. Similarly, there are only 21 upscale suburban districts for the West Coast chambers in the 1990s and 27 in the 2000s; thus, the change in percentage is due to a swing in relatively few districts. Still, while the results suggesting regional divergence for the middle-class suburban and upscale suburban categories are not conclusive, they are certainly noteworthy.

Because the small city and country category exhibits large sample sizes for all five of the regions,[28] more conclusive inferences about regional trajectories can be drawn based on the results for small city and country districts than can be made for middle-class

[28] The smallest sample size is for the West Coast chambers, for which there are 41 small city and country districts in the 1990s; the largest is for the rust belt chambers, for which there are 131 small city and country districts in the 1990s.

suburban or upscale suburban districts. And unlike the middle-class suburban and upscale suburban categories, the small city and country category displays an unmistakable trend of regional *convergence.* All five regions experience an increase in Republican representation of small city and country districts between 1995 and 2011. The increase is, of course, especially pronounced in the South, which is situated far below the other four categories in terms of Republican representation rates in 1995. By 2011, however, all five regions have risen to a level of Republican representation of small city and country districts that is strikingly similar (between 78% and 80% for four of the categories; 87% for the rust belt).

Finally, the trend among outer suburban districts does not clearly show either regional divergence or regional convergence. In 1995, outer suburban districts demonstrate rates of Republican representation of between 75% and 90% in each of the five regions. Between 1995 and 2011, Republican representation rates in this category rise fairly evenly in four of the five district categories, such that by 2011 Republican representation rates in these four categories are between 87% and 96%. The West Coast, on the other hand, experiences a small net decline of 6% in Republican representation rates for outer suburban districts.

On the whole, there is more evidence for regional divergence than regional convergence is Figure 3.4, but the evidence that exists in favor of regional convergence that exists is far stronger. It is also important to point out that Figure 3.4 uses 1995 as its starting point instead of 1993. This was done so that the Alabama House could be included in the figures so as to yield a larger sample of Southern state legislative districts.

If the figure could have been stretched back to 1993 (before the 1994 elections), it is almost certain that it would have displayed higher rates of regional convergence, particularly for outer suburban districts and small city and country districts. This is because the percentages of Southern districts within these categories that were represented by Republicans before the 1994 elections are likely to have been exceedingly low.

CHANGES IN THE SOCIAL BUILDING-BLOCKS OF STATE LEGISLATIVE PARTIES

The question addressed here is, from a purely political standpoint, the most important that this chapter seeks to address: how have changes in the geographical building-blocks of state legislative parties influenced patterns of party control in state legislatures over the past twenty years? Stated differently, when demographic changes influencing the distribution of district categories come together with electoral changes influencing the tendency of districts within each category to elect Democrats or Republicans, what is the overall effect on who is in charge in statehouses?

Prior to examining this question in depth, it is helpful to provide some context concerning the struggle for control of state legislative chambers over the past several decades. While trends in party control of state legislatures have historically been far more unstable than those of the U.S. Congress (particularly over the course of the last several

election cycles),[29] a bird's eye view of party conflict in state legislatures reveals a clear long-term trend in favor of the GOP. Throughout the 1980s, Democrats controlled well over 60 of the 98 partisan state legislative chambers. But during the 1990s and early 2000s, Republicans made steady gains (though Democrats rolled many of them back in the late 2000s). After the Republican triumph in the 2010 election, however, Republicans controlled 58 of the 98 chambers, the highest number in the three-decade period. While much of this overall gain can be attributed to Republican ascendance in Southern state legislative chambers, Republicans have also made notable and fairly durable gains in the Great Plains and Industrial Midwest.

By this point, readers will hopefully have some guesses about the geographically-based processes that might lie behind the ascendance of Republicans in numerous state legislative chambers across the country. Based on the results of previous sections of this chapter, it seems likely that the rise of Republicans in many state legislatures is related to the growing dominance of Republicans in the representation of outer suburban, small city and country, and deep rural districts. Still, in order to flesh out the precise connection between changes in the relative prevalence of the district categories, changes in electoral characteristics of these categories, and the struggle for control of legislative chambers throughout the country, it is necessary to disaggregate the data presented in earlier sections into individual chambers. Here, I focus upon six chambers in my dataset that

[29] To be sure, the degree of volatility in state legislative party control has varied greatly across states. In some states, one party has exercised a long and durable hold on one or both legislative chambers, while in others (especially but not exclusively Southern states) party control has shifted frequently. In the aggregate, however, measures of state legislative party control (i.e., the percentage of chambers controlled by Republicans) have shifted more rapidly than has the partisan composition of the U.S. Congress.

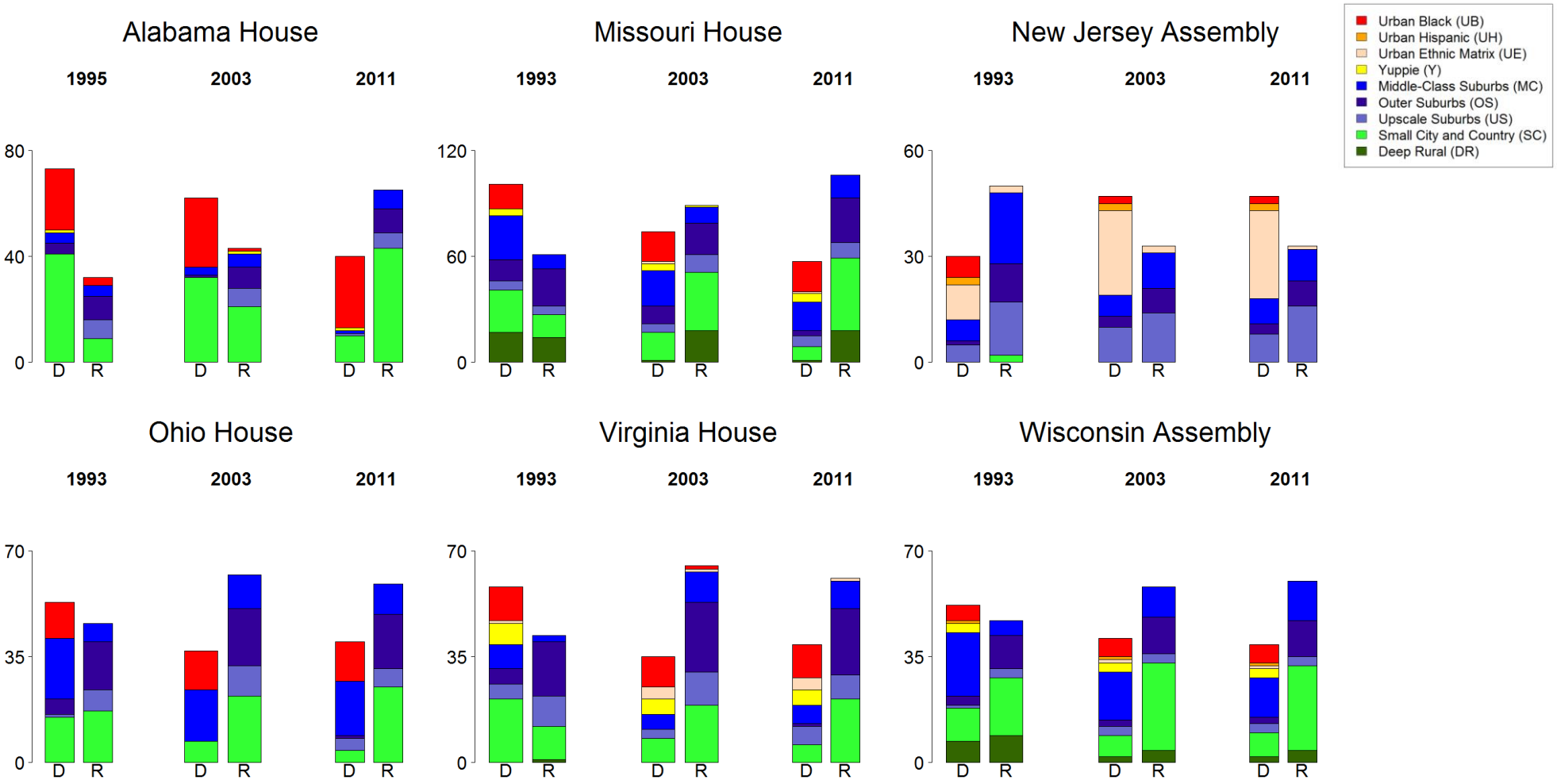
have experienced fairly durable changes in party control over the course of the past twenty years: the Alabama House, Missouri House, New Jersey Assembly, Ohio House, Virginia House, and Wisconsin Assembly. In the case of five of these six chambers, Democrats were firmly ensconced as the majority party in the early 1990s but have since yielded control to Republicans. In one chamber (the New Jersey Assembly), the opposite occurred: a long-lasting Republican majority gave way to Democratic control.

Figure 3.5 (p. 103) includes three sets of two columns for each of the six chambers. The sets of columns correspond to a particular time point (1993, 2003, and 2011);[30] the columns signify the total number of districts in the chamber that were represented by the respective parties during that time point. The columns are sub-divided into segments indicating the categorical membership of the districts represented by legislators from each party. Through comparing these three sets of columns against each other for each chamber, we can get a sense of how the partisan characteristics of districts belonging to each category within each state have changed across elections, how the prevalence of the categories has changed across decades, and how these changes have interacted to bring a new party to majority status. It is important to bear in mind that 2003 followed a decennial Census and redistricting cycle; therefore, changes that occur between 1993 and 2003 can be attributed to changes in the overall class composition of the sample of districts as well as changes in the tendencies of district classes to elect representatives from a given party. Because the 2011 table is based upon the exact same

[30] For the Alabama House, 1995 is used as the first time point instead of 1993.

districts as 2003, changes between 2003 and 2011 are almost entirely attributable to partisan change.

Figure 3.5: The Geographical Building Blocks of Party Caucuses in Six State Legislative Chambers, 1993-2011



Of all six chambers, the one that exhibits the clearest changes is the Alabama House. Alabama's rather stable geographical profile has meant that the distribution of district categories within the Alabama House changed little between the 1990s and 2000s. Consequently, the major changes that the Alabama House has undergone have largely been electoral rather than demographic. These electoral changes can essentially be explained via reference to one district category: small city and country districts. Over the course of the 1990s and 2000s, small city and country districts (which make up nearly 50% of all districts in the Alabama House) shifted substantially from being overwhelmingly represented by Democrats to being overwhelmingly represented by Republicans, while all other district categories remained largely stable in their electoral characteristics.[31] Thus, Republican ascendance in small city and country districts largely explains how the GOP was able to take control of the Alabama House for the first time since Reconstruction in 2010. GOP success among small city and country districts in Alabama has had one other important consequence. By 2010, the party caucuses in the newly-competitive Alabama House were both dominated by legislators representing districts from a single geographical category: small city and country districts in the case of Republicans, urban black districts in the case of Democrats. At the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, party politics in the Alabama House of Representatives has taken on a strong racial-geographical character.

As it turns out, however, GOP ascendance in small city and country districts during the 1990s and 2000s was a pivotal component of partisan transformation in many

[31] Upscale suburban, outer suburban, and -- to a lesser degree -- middle-class suburban districts in Alabama had already realigned to the Republican column by the early 1990s).

state legislative chambers besides the Alabama House of Representatives. Indeed, an examination of the charts in Figure 6 reveals that the same basic trend that unfolded in the Alabama House occurred (albeit in varying degrees) in each of the other chambers that switched to durable Republican control. Much as in the Alabama House, GOP success in small city and country districts explains nearly all of the Republicans' increased seat share in the Ohio House. This is despite the fact that the percentage of small city and country districts in the Ohio House decreased between the 1990s and the 2000s and the fact that Democrats have increased their level of representation in upscale suburban districts, which have grown in prevalence in the state.

Trends in the Missouri House, Wisconsin Assembly, and Virginia House are more complicated than in the Alabama House and Ohio House because of the greater diversity of district categories and the complex interactions between demographic and electoral change. In the 1990s, both the Missouri House and Wisconsin Assembly had a large percentage of deep rural districts that were represented almost evenly between the two parties. By the late 2000s, however, these districts had transformed into small city and country districts, the bulk of which were now represented exclusively by Republicans. Additionally, Republicans substantially increased their seat share among outer suburban districts in Missouri and among middle-class suburban districts in Wisconsin. In the Virginia House, on the other hand, demographic change between 1990 and 2000 redounded in a slightly greater prevalence of urban black, urban ethnic matrix, and yuppie districts during the 2000s; these categories overwhelmingly elect Democrats. But Republican ascendance in small city and country, outer suburban, and middle-class

suburban districts greatly outweighed the growth of Democratic-leaning categories, thus largely explaining the GOP's newfound strength in this chamber.

The peculiar case of the New Jersey Assembly bears special mention. As noted above, it is one example of a legislative chamber that has over the last two decades shifted to durable Democratic control. In examining the results in Figure 6 for the New Jersey Assembly, one quickly notices the dramatic change in the prevalence of certain district categories between 1993 and 2003. In particular, the prevalence of urban ethnic matrix districts and (to a lesser degree) upscale suburban districts has increased while the prevalence of middle-class suburban and (to a lesser degree) urban black districts has declined. These patterns make sense in light of New Jersey's status as a state exhibiting high rates of *out-migration* among low and middle-income Americans and high rates of *in-migration* among upper-income Americans and immigrants (Young, Varner, and Massey 2008). As can be seen, these demographic trends have worked largely to the benefit of Democrats. Middle-class suburban districts that had elected Republicans in the 1990s became urban ethnic matrix districts that elected Democrats in the 2000s, while both parties benefited from the increase in upscale suburban districts in the state.

When considered in unison, the results for these six state legislative chambers tell us much about why trends in party control of state legislatures have unfolded as they have. In essence, the story is that electoral changes (primarily among outer suburban, small city and country, and deep rural districts) have benefited Republican state legislative caucuses while demographic changes (i.e., the increased prevalence of urban Hispanic, urban ethnic matrix, and upscale suburban districts) have generally benefited

Democratic caucuses. But the impact of the former has been much more substantial than the impact of the latter.

CONCLUSION

This chapter uses the microgeographical approach that is at the heart of this dissertation to explain changes in the geographical contours of state legislative politics over the past twenty years. An effort has been made to show how the complex demographic and electoral patterns influencing trends in party representation in the states can be better understood by situating them within the nine-fold categorization scheme developed in Chapter Two. Through examining changes in the distribution of district categories across decades and in the tendency of different district categories to elect Republicans and Democrats across election periods, we can get a much more detailed sense of the ways in which the constituency bases of state legislative parties have been altered over the past twenty years.

The results of the chapter suggest that demographic trends have benefited Democrats while electoral trends have benefited Republicans over the time period at hand. On the one hand, the rapid growth of ethnic and racial minorities has resulted in the increased prominence of district categories with large percentages of ethnic and racial minority groups (i.e., urban Hispanic and urban ethnic matrix districts). Because both of these categories of districts are far more likely to elect Democrats than Republicans, the growing racial diversity of the United States has been crucial in maintaining the numerical strength of many Democratic state legislative caucuses.

On the other hand, Democrats have suffered enormous losses in two categories of low-density districts: small city and country districts and deep rural districts. Collectively, these district categories declined significantly in numbers between the 1990s and 2000s. Despite their combined numerical decline, the large increases in the percentages of these district categories sending Republicans to statehouses have resulted in substantial growth in the number of Republican representatives from these districts between 1993 and 2011. Conversely, the twin factors of numerical decline and secular realignment in favor of Republicans has meant that the number of Democratic legislators from these districts has shrunk to exceedingly low levels.

The joint effect of growth in the number of minority-rich urban districts and partisan change in favor of Republicans in low-density white districts is very much in line with claims that the American party bases are becoming more geographically segregated. Indeed, both trends serve to make legislators representing densely-populated districts more prevalent among Democratic caucuses and legislators representing sparsely-populated districts more prevalent among Republican caucuses. Figure 3.3 unmistakably suggests that the high-density and low-density district categories are diverging as far as partisan representation is concerned.

But while the highly urban and highly rural district categories have moved in the direction of greater political uniformity, two of the three suburban district categories have become more politically heterogeneous over the last two decades. Middle-class suburban districts continue to be primarily represented by Democrats, but over the past twenty years, they have become moderately more likely to be represented by Republicans. A far

larger move toward heterogeneity has occurred among upscale suburban districts. Primarily represented by Republicans in the early 1990s, upscale suburban districts have shifted so substantially that, some two decades later, they are the most marginal of all district categories in terms of partisan representation. The partisan changes that middle-class suburban and upscale suburban districts have undergone seem to indicate that the divergent demographic and geographical trends impacting American politics are meeting at the suburbs. In an age of political balkanization, therefore, suburban legislative districts may be the closest approximation to the political melting pots that dominated previous eras of American politics.

Chapter Four: The Influence of Party and Geography on the Ideological Distributions of State Legislative Chambers

In this chapter of my dissertation, I shift from exploring external dynamics affecting state legislatures to examining their internal workings. Whereas earlier chapters focused upon presenting the district categorization scheme and using the resulting categories to develop a narrative explaining how the partisan compositions of state legislatures have changed across time, this chapter focuses on outcomes inside legislatures, in particular differences in roll-call voting ideology.[32] The central question at hand is: how do party affiliation and geographical constituency (expressed as the district categories) interact to influence the placement of state legislators in ideological space? Because patterns of legislative conflict are not static, I also investigate a related secondary question: how has the influence of the geographical constituency upon roll-call ideology changed between the late 1990s and more recent times? To analyze these questions, I collect and analyze extensive roll-call data from the seventeen state legislative chambers under examination for two time periods – 1999-2000 and 2011-2012.

Despite the complexity of roll-call voting patterns that exist within contemporary American statehouses, my results can be distilled into a fairly simple set of observations. To begin with, commensurate with other recent studies examining the forces influencing

[32] I will frequently use the terms "roll-call voting ideology" or "roll-call ideology" to refer to the within-chamber placement of legislators along the liberal-conservative dimension on the basis of roll-call voting data. Roll-call voting ideology is distinct from personal ideology, which refers to a legislator's personal views on public policy and is best measured through surveys.

roll-call voting decisions in state legislatures (Shor and McCarty 2011; Jenkins 2008), I find that party is the most important influence upon the structure of roll-call voting in every state legislative chamber I examine. To say that party is the most important influence is not to say that it is the only influence, however. In fact, state legislative chambers vary widely in the extent to which their parties are polarized, and in chambers exhibiting relatively low levels of party polarization, the role of geography is very palpable. This is especially the case among Democratic caucuses, almost all of which exhibit strong intra-party geographical differences in roll-call voting patterns.

Second, striking similarities across legislative chambers exist in the distinct coalitional configurations formed by the interplay between legislators' party affiliations and the geographical categories of the districts they represent. To a degree not previously recognized, the political dynamics that emerge as a result of the competing pressures of party and geography play out in very similar ways in many statehouses. Interestingly, however, legislative chambers that exhibit the most similar coalitional patterns are often not found in states that are contiguous or even located in the same region. *The best predictor of the nature of the geographical patterns of roll-call voting within a state legislative chamber is not the state's macrogeographical location but rather the microgeographical differences that exist within it.* This point will be reinforced at various points throughout the chapter.

Finally, a comparison of results for 1999-2000 with results for 2011-2012 reveals higher levels of partisan polarization in the latter period in most state legislative chambers. Thus, this study suggests that, much as in the U.S. Congress, partisan

polarization in the American state legislatures has been growing. Examining changes in the geographical structure underpinning party conflict inside the chambers in my sample, I uncover strong evidence suggesting that the increase in partisan polarization inside state legislatures is at least in part a result of the increased tendency of districts in the same category to be represented by only one political party. As shown in Chapter Three, during the 1990s several district categories (most notably, small city and country and deep rural districts) were nearly evenly represented between Democrats and Republicans, but by the 1990s these categories had joined most of the others in being overwhelming represented by legislators from one party or the other (in this case, the Republicans). In this chapter, I show that the Democratic legislators from small city and country and deep rural districts that were so prevalent in the 1990s were almost always the most conservative legislators within their caucuses. Over the course of the late 1990s and 2000s, many of these legislators either voluntary retired, were defeated for reelection, or were forced out by term limits. In the process, Democratic legislators occupying the center of the ideological distributions in many state legislative chambers were replaced by Republican legislators at the far-right end of the ideological spectrum. This dynamic has had the simultaneous effect of making Democratic state legislative caucuses more ideologically homogeneous while pushing Republican state legislative caucuses to the right. The final outcome has been greater partisan polarization.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I lay out the methods used to estimate ideal points for state legislators in seventeen states and during two different eras. I then proceed to present my results in both thematic and chronological order. Focusing first on

1999-2000, I show how states in this period vary in the extent to which their legislative parties are polarized, and link these variations to intraparty differences among legislators from different geographical categories. I then move to the more recent period and point to evidence suggesting that state legislative parties have consistently diverged over the past 10-15 years. Examining a number of states in-depth, I demonstrate that the ideological divergence of state legislative parties has in part occurred as a result of the sorting of the parties' geographical bases.

DATA AND METHODS

This chapter makes use of 32 roll-call datasets. Seventeen datasets (for each of the 17 legislative chambers in the analysis) are from 1999-2000 and were retrieved from the website of the *Representation in America's Legislatures* (RAL) project, overseen by Indiana University political scientist Gerald Wright. RAL data have been extensively edited, and only include roll-calls for an entire legislative body (as opposed to committee votes, etc.) in which at least 5% of votes cast were minority votes.

The other fifteen datasets are from 2011-2012 and were downloaded from the website of the Open States Project (www.openstates.org), an exciting new venture of the Sunlight Foundation that seeks to put much state government data online in easily downloadable formats. [33] Data from the Open States project are fairly raw and thus needed to be substantially re-shaped and edited so that they could be used for roll-call

[33] The fifteen datasets include 2010-2012 data for all of the original seventeen chambers except the Missouri House and the Oregon House. In the case of the Missouri House, data were not downloaded because the Open States Project has not yet begun to collect data for that particular chamber. In the case of the Oregon House, 2011-2012 data were downloaded but they could not be properly edited so as to be used for roll-call analysis.

analysis. For all chambers, committee votes were removed (when necessary) so that only roll-call votes for an entire legislative body were included; additionally, all near-unanimous votes (i.e., votes in which more than 95% of the chamber was in agreement) were removed as well. In this way, the structures of the Open States datasets were made to be identical to those of the RAL datasets. Finally, in preparation for the ideal point estimation procedure, all "yes" roll-call votes in the datasets were recoded to 1, all "no" roll-call votes in the datasets were recoded to 0, and all other roll-call voting decisions were recoded as missing values.

Table 4.1 (next page) provides some basic information about each of the roll-call datasets that were used in the analyses of this chapter. Because the datasets include legislators who fill vacancies in the middle of a legislative session, the number of legislators in each dataset is often slightly higher than the overall size of the chamber to which it corresponds. As can be seen, substantial variation exists across chambers in the number of roll-call votes that are cast within a legislative session, a fact that is likely related to the frequency with which the chambers meet. For example, whereas the highly professionalized California Assembly meets annually and throughout the year, the Nevada Assembly meets only once every two years and for a maximum of 120 days. It is not surprising, therefore, that many more roll-call votes are cast over a two-year period in the California Assembly than are cast in the lower chamber of California's neighbor to the east.

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics on Chapter Four Roll-Call Datasets

	1999-2000 data		2011-2012 data	
	Number of Legislators	Number of Roll-Call Votes	Number of Legislators	Number of Roll-Call Votes
AL House	105	356	106	416
CA Assembly	80	2215	80	1544
IA House	103	284	100	129
IL House	121	425	130	614
IN House	101	474	101	552
MI House	110	1129	112	755
MN House	135	807	135	1105
MO House	168	785	N/A	N/A
NJ Assembly*	84	182	84	266
NV Assembly	42	138	42	162
NY Assembly	150	316	159	569
OH House	107	232	112	312
OR House	60	748	N/A	N/A
PA House	204	530	208	662
VA House	108	1301	104	642**
WA House	100	146	101	545
WI Assembly	100	435	101	535

* Because their legislative sessions begin in even-numbered years, data for the NJ House and VA House come from 2010-2011 rather than 2011-2012.
** A substantial amount of roll-call data was missing from the 2011-2012 Open State dataset for the Virginia House. The total number of roll-call votes including missing data is 1232.

After data editing was completed, one-dimensional spatial models for each of the 32 datasets were estimated. Spatial model estimation was conducted using the Bayesian MCMC item-response procedure developed by Clinton, Jackman, and Rivers (2004), results from which correlate extremely strongly with those from the more well-known NOMINATE procedure developed by Poole and Rosenthal (1997).[34] Ideal points were constrained to have a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one, so that within-chamber values tend to range from 2 - 3 standard deviations below the mean (an ideal

[34] Simon Jackman's *pscl* package in R was used to estimate the models.

point value of -2 or -3) to 2 - 3 standard deviations above the mean (an ideal point value of +2 or +3). Of course, the specific range of ideal points varies by chamber.

Unidimensional models were estimated so as to simplify the analyses conducted in this chapter, and because the most extensive study of state legislative voting ever conducted concludes that "a single dimension explains the vast bulk of the voting in state legislatures" (Shor and McCarty 2011, 533; see also Wright and Schaffner 2002). Importantly, however, Jochim and Jones (2013) provide strong evidence to suggest that the appearance of overwhelming unidimensionality in roll-call voting in the U.S. Congress masks strong differences in dimensionality across issue areas. Given that most (though not all) state legislatures have tended to be somewhat less polarized by party than the U.S. Congress (Shor and McCarty 2011), it is likely that differences in the dimensionality of roll-call voting exist across policy areas in the states as well. This issue will be considered in some detail in Chapter Five. The purpose of this chapter, however, is to analyze legislator ideology as the product of all roll-call decisions that a legislator makes, across policy areas. Thus, based on the findings of earlier studies, unidimensional spatial models appear to be appropriate.

After the models were estimated, ideal point values were examined and sometimes realigned to comport with the political science custom of having positive first-dimension ideal point values indicate a more conservative ideology and negative first-dimension ideal point values indicate a more liberal ideology. In every single chamber

examined, the median Democrat and median Republican were far apart from each other, thus making identification of the models easy to accomplish.[35]

ROLL-CALL IDEOLOGY IN 1999-2000: THE EFFECT OF PARTY

Table 4.2 (next page) presents three relevant statistics measuring differences in the extent of party polarization within the seventeen legislative chambers during the 1999-2000 period: the distance between the median ideal point values of the party caucuses, the distance between the mean ideal point values of the party caucuses, and the Second Moment Separation (SMS) between the party caucuses.[36] When considered collectively, these three statistics encompass much of what is generally meant by the term "legislative polarization."[37] In considering the results in the table, recall that all of the ideal point models were constrained to yield a within-chamber mean of 0 and a within-

[35] Just how far apart they were from each other did vary substantially, as detailed in the next section of the paper.

[36] SMS is calculated by averaging "how many standard deviations the average Republican is from the average Democrat and how many standard deviations the average Democrat is from the average Republican" (Theriault 2008, 20).

[37] The distance-of-medians statistic is a useful tool for assessing party polarization in state legislatures because it measures the difference in the central ideological tendencies of legislative parties without regard to the values of extreme observations. Since many state legislative party caucuses include a small subset of legislators who are ideologically far apart from the vast majority of their co-partisans, the distance between party medians can in some circumstances be a more accurate representation of the "true" nature of party conflict within a chamber than other measures. The distance-of-means statistic, on the other hand, considers the ideological distance between party caucuses in a way that takes into account all observations equally. It has been the most common method of measuring polarization in studies of the U.S. Congress (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006). Finally, because it is a statistic that incorporates both interparty distance as well as party cohesiveness, SMS can be thought of as a more comprehensive measure of polarization than either the distance-of-medians or distance-of-means statistics.

chamber standard deviation of 1, and that within-chamber values tend to range from -3 to 3.

Table 4.2: Statistics Comparing Ideological Distance Between Democrats and Republicans in State Legislative Chambers, 1999-2000

Chamber	Distance between Party Medians	Distance between Party Means	Second Moment Separation
AL House	1.70	1.68	2.85
CA Assembly	1.90	1.88	6.05
IA House	1.91	1.92	7.39
IL House	1.71	1.71	3.65
IN House	1.91	1.91	6.83
MI House	1.92	1.87	6.36
MN House	1.88	1.90	6.37
MO House	1.82	1.89	5.65
NJ Assembly	1.80	1.89	5.50
NV Assembly	1.25	1.69	2.92
NY Assembly	1.58	1.72	5.79
OH House	1.86	1.92	5.92
OR House	1.87	1.82	4.28
PA House	1.68	1.85	5.01
VA House	1.83	1.83	4.55
WA House	1.65	1.79	4.13
WI Assembly	1.93	1.92	7.04

The first point to make about the results shown in Table 4.2 is that they point to the primacy of party in structuring roll-call voting patterns across all seventeen chambers included in this study. In no chamber is the distance between the party means less than 1.68, meaning that the difference between the average Democrat and average Republican in the seventeen chambers is always well above one standard deviation of the entire distribution of ideal point scores within a chamber. Party is therefore clearly a chief explanatory factor behind roll-call voting patterns in contemporary state legislatures.

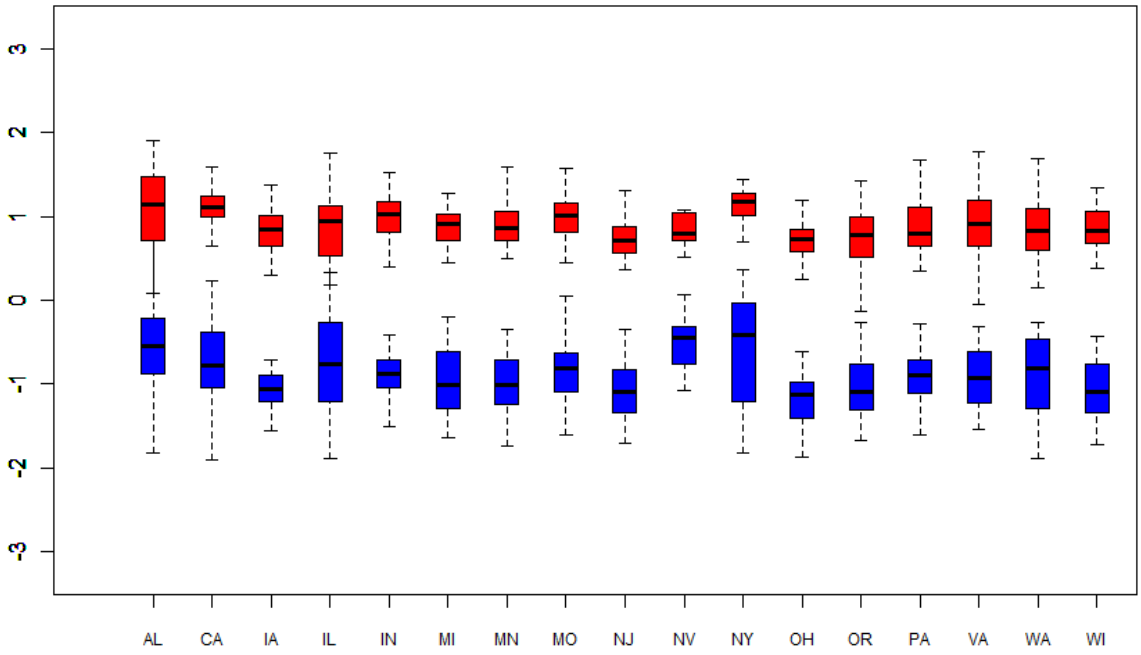
But the results found in the table also reveal substantial variation with respect to just how much of an impact party has on roll-call ideology in the seventeen chambers. While the three statistics each provide a slightly different perspective on this matter, they tend to point in a similar direction. For example, two state legislative chambers (the Iowa House and Wisconsin Assembly) register values that are among the highest across all three measures. They are closely followed by the California Assembly, Indiana House, Michigan House, and Minnesota House, which are in turn followed by the Missouri House, New Jersey Assembly, and Ohio House. At the other end of the spectrum are the Alabama House, Illinois House, and Nevada Assembly, all of which register some of the lowest values across all three of the measures. Thus, the three statistics collectively give a pretty good sense of which chambers are the most polarized and which are the least.

The remaining state legislative chambers – those that are intermediate in the extent of party polarization – register values for each of the three statistics that are not so easily reconcilable and therefore require greater explanation. The Oregon House and Virginia House, for example, exhibit large distance-of-medians and distance-of-means values but relatively low SMS values. It therefore appears that the central ideological tendencies of the legislative parties in these two chambers are far apart but that the spreads of within-party values in both chambers are nonetheless quite large. The New York Assembly, Pennsylvania House, and Washington House, on the other hand, exhibit distance-of-medians values that are considerably lower than their distance-of-means values. This disparity is likely caused by the presence of a relatively small contingent of ideologically extreme legislators in one or both party caucuses in these chambers. The

presence of these legislators has the effect of pushing the mean ideal point value for one party caucus in the ideologically extreme direction while leaving the median ideal point value unaffected.

Figure 4.1 (next page) provides a visual representation of the different patterns of party conflict in the seventeen chambers by presenting boxplots showing the distribution of ideal point scores for Democrats and Republicans within each chamber for the 1999-2000 time period. To reiterate, values were aligned for all states so that higher values indicate greater conservatism and lower values indicate greater liberalism. Boxplots for Democrats are colored blue, while boxplots for Republicans are colored red. The boxplots include a rectangular center representing the interquartile range of ideal points, inside of which lies a thick line representing the median ideal point value. Outside of the rectangular center, one can find "whiskers" representing more dispersed values. Importantly, since the ideal point values for each chamber were estimated separately (i.e., the chambers have ***not*** been placed in the same ideological space), the figure is not meant to be used for the purposes of comparing median values for Democrats or Republicans *across* chambers. Instead, its worth lies in comparing states with respect to differences between Democrats and Republican *within* chambers.

Figure 4.1: Distributions of Ideal Point Scores for Democrats and Republicans within Lower State Legislative Chambers, 1999-2000



Examining the figure sheds greater light on many of the trends that were discussed in reference to Table 4.2. For example, the boxplots for chambers such as the California Assembly, Iowa House, and Wisconsin Assembly all reveal party caucuses whose central locations are far apart from each other, and whose value ranges are fairly narrow and do not come close to overlapping. In other chambers (such as the Oregon House and Virginia house), the central locations of the party caucuses are far apart while the within-party values are quite dispersed. In still other chambers (such as the Alabama House and the Illinois House), the value ranges for the party caucuses overlap, meaning that the most conservative Democrat is more conservative than the most liberal Republican. And in the Nevada Assembly, the value ranges of the parties do not overlap

but their central locations are nonetheless far closer to each other than in all of the other chambers.

Thus, on the basis of the results displayed in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.1, the relative degree of partisan polarization among the seventeen chambers is fairly clear. What *explains* the relative degree of partisan polarization in each of the chambers is less clear, however. While some regional variation appears to exist, other factors are clearly also at play. For example, one striking commonality is that all of the legislative chambers in the upper Midwestern states (the Iowa House, Michigan House, Minnesota House, and Wisconsin Assembly) are very polarized. But the Illinois House, located in close proximity to each of these chambers, is far less so. Similarly, the California Assembly in Sacramento is quite polarized but the Nevada Assembly, located approximately 130 miles away in Carson City, is relatively unpolarized. That the Alabama House is not particularly polarized should come as no surprise – conservative Democrats were common in many Southern state legislative chambers until recently, and the ideological gap between legislative parties in Southern legislative chambers was thus much smaller than elsewhere.[38] But the polarization levels of another southern chamber, the Virginia House, are more in line with those of chambers like the Oregon House than they are with the Alabama House. Hence, while regional differences can be detected, they are not at the core of what is influencing party conflict inside state legislatures.

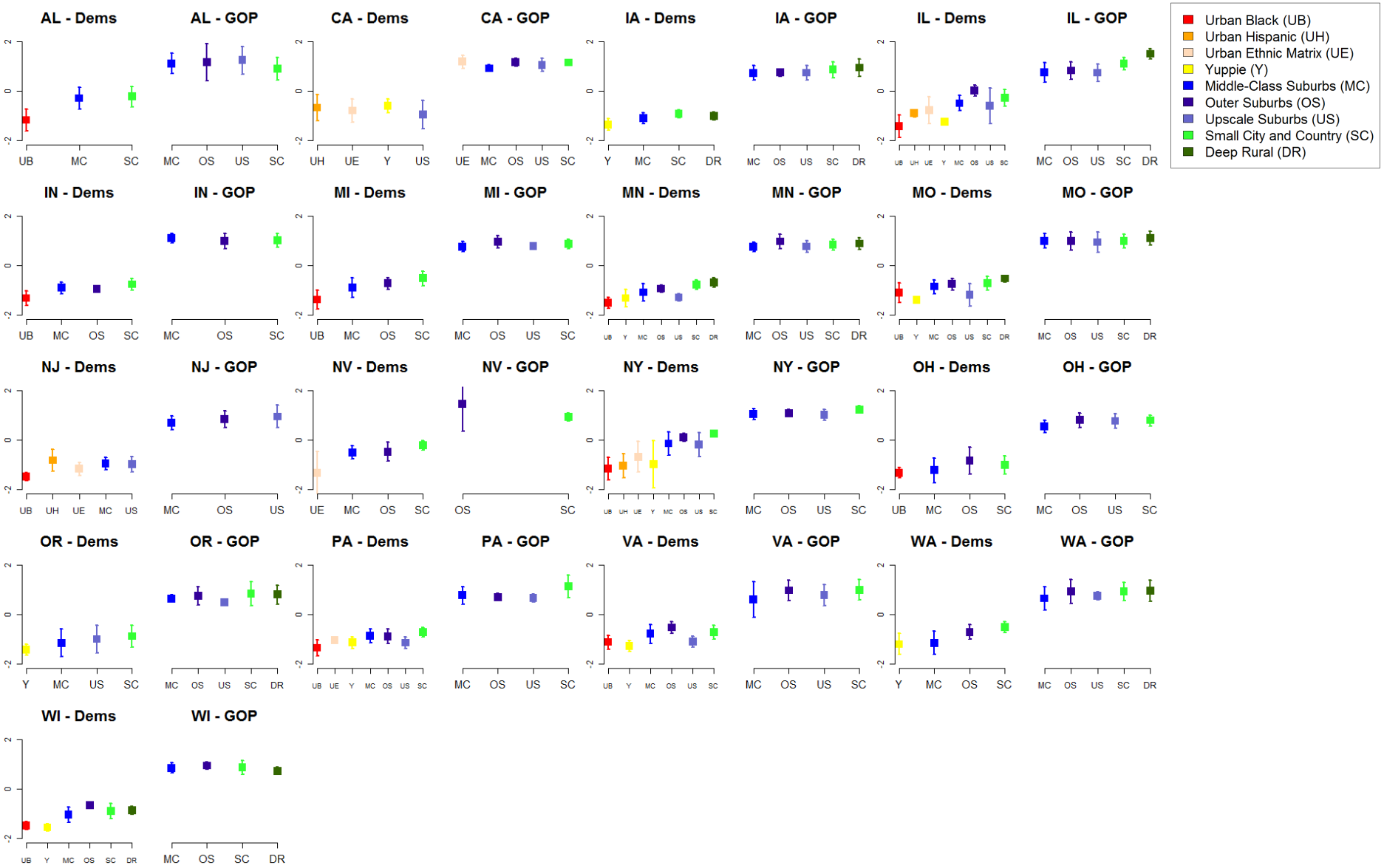
[38] The extent to which Southern state legislatures have since conformed to patterns of partisan polarization witnessed in non-Southern states will be explored later in this chapter.

ROLL-CALL IDEOLOGY IN 1999-2000: BRINGING IN GEOGRAPHY

Results from the previous section suggest that, while party may explain the bulk of ideological positioning in the legislative chambers under examination in 1999-2000, it does not explain all of it. Indeed, the visual patterns evident in Figure 4.1 suggest that a significant amount of ideological heterogeneity exists within party caucuses, particularly the Democratic caucuses of chambers like the Alabama House, Illinois House, New York Assembly, and Washington House. The question that this section of the chapter addresses is the extent to which the geographical categories introduced in Chapter Two can explain ideological heterogeneity inside legislative party caucuses.

Figure 4.2 (next page) plots the mean ideal point scores for party-geography groups (i.e., each geographical category within a party caucus for which there are at least three legislators) for all seventeen legislative chambers for 1999-2000. Legislative chambers are presented alphabetically, with mean ideal point values for Democratic legislators from particular geographical categories plotted on the left and mean ideal point values for Republican legislators from particular geographical categories plotted on the right. Each plotted point is colored according to the geographical category it represents and is supplemented by a vertical error bar indicating the standard deviation of the mean ideal point value. Mean values for geographical categories with less than three legislators for a given party caucus are not included in the figure.

Figure 4.2: Mean Ideal Point Scores for Party-Geography Groups within State Legislative Chambers, 1999-2000



The figure generally lends strong support to the contention that, in many chambers where party conflict is relatively weak (such as the Alabama House, Illinois House, and New York Assembly), geographical conflict explains a significant amount of the remaining variation in legislator roll-call ideology. Importantly, however, one can also find more subtle evidence of the importance of geographical conflict in some of the more polarized chambers. Prior to examining individual chambers in depth, it is useful to consider some commonalities that can be found among just about all of the chambers.

First and foremost, one obvious and consistent pattern is that the geographical categories are far more useful for the purpose of explaining ideological heterogeneity inside Democratic caucuses than they are for explaining heterogeneity inside Republican caucuses. Indeed, among most Republican caucuses, the mean ideal point values for legislators representing different categories of districts are strikingly similar (two exceptions to this trend are the Illinois House and, to a lesser degree, the Pennsylvania House). In most cases, the standard deviations for the values of Republican group are very small, suggesting that most Republican caucuses are extraordinarily cohesive and there is simply not much variation inside of them to explain. But in a few cases (most notably, the Alabama House and Washington House), the standard deviations of the mean values for the categories are fairly large, suggesting that there is some variation in roll-call ideology among Republicans in these particular chambers but that geography does not provide much leverage in explaining it.

With respect to geographical differences among Democrats, there are several unusually consistent patterns. The first is that legislators from urban black districts and

yuppie districts almost always occupy the most liberal position in Democratic caucuses. In chambers where a mean value for yuppie districts does not appear (i.e., there are less than three yuppie districts represented by Democrats), Democratic legislators from urban black districts evince mean values that are far more liberal than those of Democratic legislators representing districts from any other category. This is the case in chambers as distinct as the Alabama House, Indiana House, and New Jersey Assembly. Likewise, in chambers where a mean value for urban black districts does not appear (such as the Iowa House, Oregon House, and Washington House), legislators from yuppie districts evince mean values that are considerably more liberal than those of Democratic legislators from other categories. In chambers exhibiting values for Democratic legislators from both urban black districts and yuppie districts, legislators from these two categories tend to be in close ideological proximity to each other, though the former usually evince mean values that are slightly more liberal. Finally, in one chamber in the sample – the Nevada Assembly – there are not a sufficient number of Democratic legislators from either urban black districts or yuppie districts to warrant the inclusion of the corresponding data points in the figure. Instead, the figure shows that, in the Nevada Assembly, Democrats from urban ethnic matrix districts are easily the most liberal members of their caucus.

Whereas legislators from urban black and yuppie districts consistently occupy the liberal end of the ideological spectrum within Democratic caucuses, legislators from outer suburban, small city and country, and deep rural districts nearly always occupy the conservative end. In chambers where Democratic legislators from deep rural districts can be found in sufficient numbers, they are almost always the most conservative members of

their caucuses (one exception is the Wisconsin Assembly, where outer suburban legislators are more conservative than deep rural legislators). In chambers without Democratic legislators from deep rural districts, legislators from outer suburban and small city and country districts are in close ideological proximity, though more often than not it is the latter who exhibit the most conservative mean ideal point values.

While the similarity across chambers in the ideological positions of Democratic legislators from the same geographical categories is certainly striking, it would be a mistake to assume that such parallels imply that the nature of political conflict inside Democratic caucuses is the same everywhere. Though it is helpful in teasing out the relationships discussed above, Figure 4.2 is an incomplete representation of the substance of intra-caucus conflict within chambers because it does not account for the relative size of the party-geography groups within each chamber. Considering the relative size of legislator party-geography groups alongside their mean ideal point values can help us to get a better sense of how coalitional configurations that appear to be similar in Figure 4.2 are actually quite different from each other.

Table 4.3 (next page) presents the mean ideal point values for relevant geographical groups of sufficient size within the Democratic caucuses of the Alabama House, Indiana House, and Michigan House. While Figure 4.2 suggests that these three chambers exhibit similar patterns of ideological positioning within their Democratic caucuses (i.e., legislators from urban black districts are more liberal than Democratic legislators from other district categories), Table 4.3 reveals important differences in the nature of conflict inside these caucuses.

Table 4.3: Influential Geographical Groups within the Democratic Caucuses of the Alabama, Indiana, and Michigan Houses, 1999-2000

	Category	Mean Ideal Point Value	Percent of Democratic Caucus
Alabama House			
	Urban Black	-1.17	38%
	Middle-Class suburbs	-0.28	4%
	Small City and Country	-0.22	54%
Indiana House			
	Urban Black	-1.31	13%
	Middle-Class suburbs	-0.89	40%
	Outer Suburbs	-0.94	8%
	Small City and Country	-0.76	36%
Michigan House			
	Urban Black	-1.37	29%
	Middle-Class suburbs	-0.88	40%
	Outer Suburbs	-0.72	10%
	Small City and Country	-0.52	13%

In the Alabama House, legislators from urban black districts and small city and country districts constitute the overwhelming majority of the Democratic caucus, but these two groups are exceptionally far apart in terms of mean ideology. The divisions between these large groups of Democratic legislators suggest that the Democratic Caucus in the Alabama House (at least in 1999-2000) is really best described as two separate cohorts. In the Indiana House, on the other hand, the percentage of Democratic legislators who represent urban black districts is far lower than it is the Alabama House (13% instead of 38%), and the ideological distance between legislators from urban black districts and legislators from other categories is not as vast. Thus, in the Indiana House, Democratic legislators from urban black districts are neither so distinct nor so important,

and can be thought of as merely the most liberal component of their party caucus. Finally, from both a compositional and ideological perspective, the Michigan House is intermediate between the Alabama House and the Indiana House. Legislators from urban black districts make up a larger proportion of the Democratic caucus in the Michigan House than in the Indiana House but a smaller proportion than they do in the Alabama House. Ideologically, legislators from urban black districts stand further apart from much of the rest of the Democratic caucus in the Michigan House than they do in the Indiana House but less so than they do in the Alabama House.

CHANGES SINCE 1999-2000: GROWTH IN PARTISAN POLARIZATION

Results from previous sections point to substantial differences in the extent to which state legislative chambers at the turn of the 20th century exhibited high levels of partisan polarization, as well as in the leverage provided by the geographical framework at the center of this study in explaining within-party differences in legislator ideology during this same time period. In this section, I turn to examining how the patterns of legislative conflict described in earlier sections have changed over the course of the first decade of the 21st century. It is fairly well-established that these ten years witnessed the continued partisan polarization of the U.S. Congress (Haidt and Hetherington 2012) as well as the continued sorting-out of the electoral bases of the national political parties (Cho, Gimpel, and Hui 2013). It is far less well-known, however, how these national trends have affected state politics.

Table 4.4 (next page) provides the same three statistics measuring party polarization that were presented earlier in Table 4.2, but this time for two time periods:

1999-2000 and 2011-2012. Data for both time points are included for fifteen of the seventeen chambers examined in this study.[39] Comparing the results from these two time periods gives some sense of the overall trajectory of partisan conflict in these chambers. While it is possible that the changes suggested by the results of Table 4.4 are artifacts of comparing just two time points, results that consistently point in one direction across chambers do provide strong evidence of a broad underlying trend.

Table 4.4: Statistics Comparing Ideological Distance Between Democrats and Republicans in State Legislative Chambers, 1999-2000 and 2011-2012

	Distance between Party Medians		Difference between Party Means		Second Moment Separation	
	1999-2000	2011-2012	1999-2000	2011-2012	1999-2000	2011-2012
AL	1.70	2.05	1.68	1.90	2.85	5.07
CA	1.90	2.03	1.88	1.98	6.05	6.19
IA	1.91	1.87	1.92	1.93	7.39	6.56
IL	1.71	1.63	1.71	1.70	3.65	3.44
IN	1.91	1.90	1.91	1.95	6.83	6.99
MI	1.92	1.92	1.87	1.96	6.36	9.32
MN	1.88	1.91	1.90	1.93	6.37	7.34
NJ	1.80	1.89	1.89	1.98	5.50	9.30
NV	1.25	1.86	1.69	1.94	2.92	7.85
NY	1.58	1.84	1.72	1.79	5.79	4.09
OH	1.86	1.89	1.92	1.95	5.92	6.86
PA	1.68	1.88	1.85	1.93	5.01	7.26
VA	1.83	1.90	1.83	1.90	4.55	5.45
WA	1.65	1.79	1.79	1.85	4.13	5.02
WI	1.93	1.92	1.92	1.94	7.04	7.58

[39] Data for two chambers (the Missouri House and the Oregon House) are not included because 2011-2012 ideal points for these chambers could not be estimated due to data availability issues.

The results of the table show many interesting trends for individual chambers, but the most important point is that party polarization in most chambers is clearly higher in 2011-2012 than it is in 1999-2000. For 1999-2000, the ranges of values for each of the statistics were 1.25 to 1.92 for distance-of-medians, 1.68 to 1.92 for distance-of-means, and 2.85 to 7.39 for the Second Moment Separation (SMS); for 2011-2012, the ranges were 1.63 to 2.05 for distance-of-medians, 1.70 to 1.98 for distance-of-means, and 3.44 to 9.32 for SMS. Distance-of-medians values were greater in 2011-2012 in 11 of 15 chambers, distance-of-means values were greater in 14 of 15 chambers, and SMS values were greater in 12 of 15 chambers.

The most noteworthy changes occur in two of the three least polarized chambers in 1999-2000, the Alabama House and Nevada Assembly. In both of these chambers, the increases in all three statistics between the two time periods are truly impressive. Indeed, in 2011-2012, the distance-of-medians value for the Alabama House is the highest of any chamber in that time period! Its SMS value remains on the low end of the spectrum, however, suggesting that while the median Democrat and Republican in the Alabama House are now very far apart, much heterogeneity continues to exist within the chamber's party caucuses. As for the Nevada Assembly, its polarization scores in 2011-2012 consistently place it in the upper rung of all the chambers. Especially impressive is its 2011-2012 SMS score, which is exceeded only by two chambers among the fifteen. The circumstances surrounding the transformation of partisan politics in the Alabama House and Nevada Assembly between 1999-2000 and 2011-2012 (and, in particular, the role

played by geography in these transformations) will be discussed in the next section of the chapter.

Besides the Alabama House and Nevada Assembly, several other chambers show striking changes as well. The Michigan House and New Jersey Assembly, both of which exhibit fairly high polarization levels in 1999-2000, are quite a bit more polarized in 2011-2012. These two chambers are the only ones whose SMS values exceeds 9.00 at either the time period under examination, meaning a case could be made that they are the most polarized chamber-time dyads in the entire sample. Another chamber experiencing a substantial increase in polarization is the Pennsylvania House; in 1999-2000 it shows some signs of polarization, but in 2011-2012 it is by all standards thoroughly polarized. Other chambers experience more modest increases in polarization than the aforementioned chambers. The California Assembly, Indiana House, Minnesota House, and Ohio House, for example, are all quite polarized in 1999-2000 and are more so in 2011-2012, though the change is not overwhelming.

Despite the clear increase in polarization levels in most chambers, there remain several chambers that are not particularly polarized in 2011-2012. The Washington House and Virginia House are by all standards more polarized in 2011-2012 than in 1999-2000, but their scores remain below the levels at which the more polarized chambers were located in 1999-2000. By far the two biggest laggards in polarization are the New York Assembly and Illinois House, however. The New York Assembly evinces an interesting paradox – higher distance-of-medians and distance-of-means scores but a substantial lower SMS score. This suggests that the central tendencies of the parties in the

New York Assembly have diverged while within-party ideological variation has increased. But the most confounding chamber of all is the Illinois House, for which all three polarization measures are lower rather than higher in 2011-2012! Recall that the Illinois House was one of the three least polarized chambers in 1999-2000. In 2011-2012, however, the Illinois House is undisputedly the least polarized chamber in the sample.

THE INTERSECTION OF PARTY, GEOGRAPHY, AND TIME: A CLOSER LOOK AT THE EVOLUTION OF CONFLICT IN STATE LEGISLATIVE CHAMBERS

In previous sections of this chapter, we learned that state legislative chambers exhibiting high levels of intra-party geographical cleavage in 1999-2000 also tended to evince relatively low levels of party polarization. We also learned that levels of party polarization were substantially higher in 2011-2012 than they were in 1999-2000 in most of the chambers under examination in this study. And earlier, in Chapter Three, we learned that between these two time periods, two of the nine district categories (small city and country districts and deep rural districts) experienced a particularly dramatic electoral realignment in favor of the GOP. To reiterate, in 1999, 64% and 72% of them were represented by Republicans, but by 2011 these percentages had risen to 83% and 78%, respectively.

When all of these insights are jointly considered, a reasonable hypothesis emerges: state legislative chambers became more polarized over the course of the first decade of the 21st century in part because of the sorting of the geographical bases of their party caucuses. In other words, as Democratic legislators from small city and country and deep rural districts became increasingly scarce inside statehouses across the country,

Democratic legislative caucuses lost many of their most conservative members. Simultaneously, Republican legislative caucuses saw their ranks swell as numerous new (and often very conservative) legislators from these two district categories entered their ranks. These twin processes (ultimately caused by the same instigator) had the joint effect of dramatically increasing the partisan divide in statehouses across the country.

Thoroughly assessing the merits of this hypothesis would entail directly comparing the individual ideal points of Democratic legislators from small city and country districts who leave a given chamber to the ideal points of the Republican legislators who replace them. Such a comparison would require the estimation of ideal point models that include legislators from all legislative sessions for an individual chamber between 1999-2000 and 2011-2012, a massive undertaking for which I have neither the time or resources.[40] While I am unable to test my hypothesis in such a rigorous way, I can nonetheless use the data I have collected and the ideal point models that I have estimated to make some preliminary conjectures about its validity. Doing so involves comparing the relative positions as well as the relative sizes of different

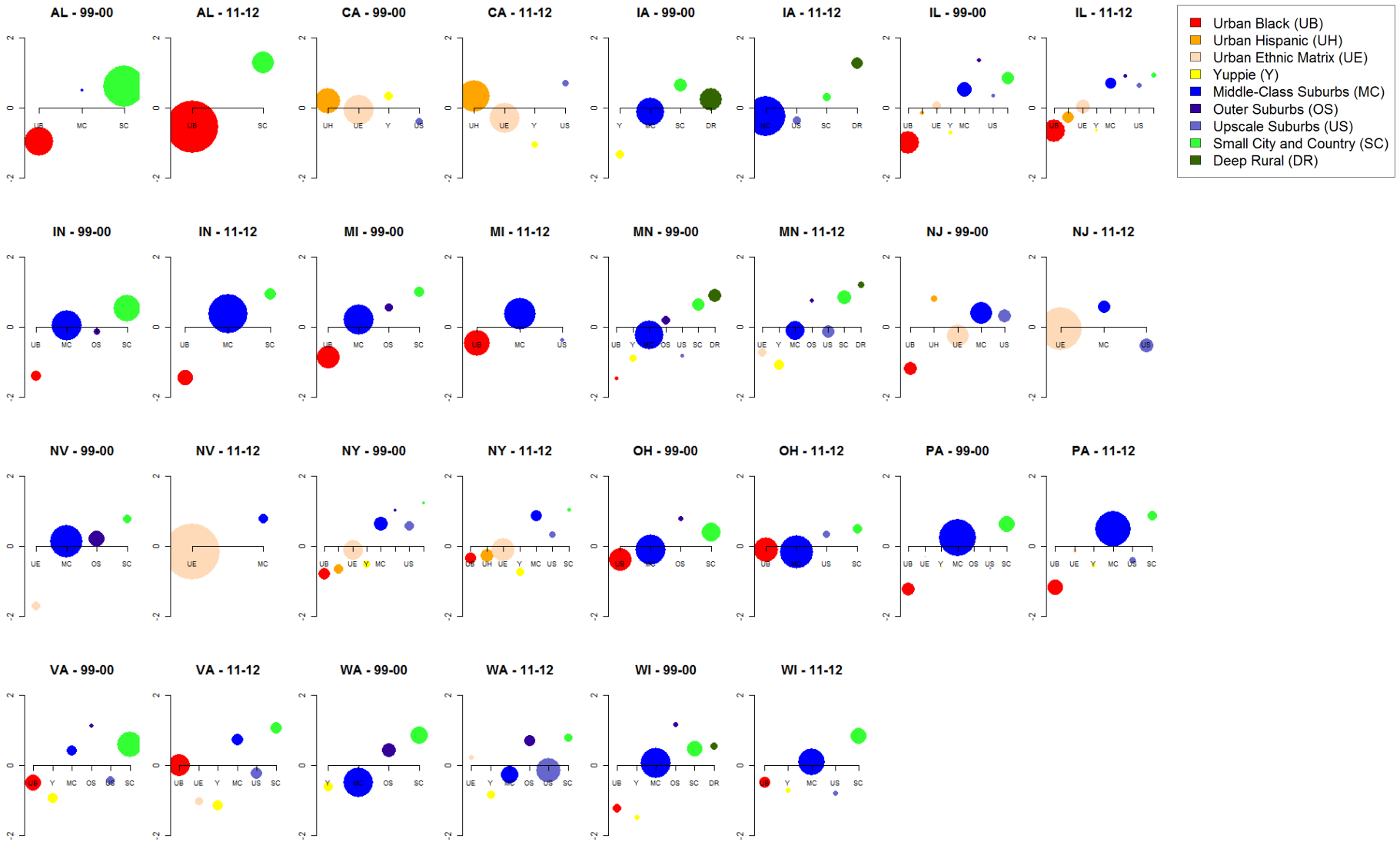
[40] Estimating such a model would require gathering roll-call data for all legislative sessions between 1999-2000 and 2011-2012 for each of the chambers, and then using this massive amount of data to place all legislators who served within each chamber during this time period on the same ideological scale (in a manner similar to the way in which DW-Nominate places U.S. House members from different Congresses on the same ideological scale). Shor and McCarty (2011) marshal a huge amount of state legislative roll-call data in a remarkable effort to place all state legislators and members of Congress between 1993 and 2011 on the same ideological space. However, the fulcrum of their analyses is legislator responses to National Political Awareness Test (NPAT) surveys, not roll-call data. Roll-call data only come into play in their models as a way of imputing NPAT scores for legislators who did not take NPAT surveys. Consequently, their ideal point estimates are best understood as estimates of personal ideology, not roll-call voting ideology.

geographical groups during the 1999-2000 and 2011-2012 sessions of each of the chambers under examination.

Figure 4.3 (next page) plots geographical groups within Democratic caucuses according to their deviation from the mean Democratic ideal point value in their chamber for the 1999-2000 and 2011-2012 sessions.[41] Once again, all chambers are included except the Missouri House and the Oregon House, for which 2011-2012 ideal points could not be estimated. The unit of measurement for the y-axis in Figure 4.3 is the standard deviation from the Democratic mean; thus, groups that are plotted near the 0-value of the y-axis have a mean ideal point value that is close to that of the entire Democratic caucus, groups that are plotted near the 1-value of the y-axis have a mean ideal point value that is close to one standard deviation above the mean value of the entire Democratic caucus, etc. The geographical groups are plotted as circles whose sizes vary according to their overall numerical contribution to the Democratic caucus – the larger the circle, the larger the percentage of Democratic legislators who represent a district from that category. Plots are ordered alphabetically according to chamber and chronologically according to session (1999-2000 or 2011-2012).

[41] In concert with Figure 4.2 and to simplify the results displayed on the plots, geographical groups that include less than three legislators are not included in the plots.

Figure 4.3: Deviation from Mean Democratic Ideal Point Score among Geographical Groups in Democratic Caucuses, 1999-2000 and 2011-2012



While Figure 4.3 may at first seem a bit frenetic, it reveals much about why some chambers have experienced a substantial increase in polarization between 1999-2000 and 2011-2012. One of these chambers is the Alabama House, which (as per the previous section) experienced a particularly dramatic rise in polarization. Examining the first two plots in Figure 4.3 (those that correspond to the Democratic caucus of the Alabama House in 1999-2000 and 2011-2012), one can get a good sense of one of the processes that have contributed to the divergence of the parties in this chamber. As can be seen, in 1999-2000 the Democratic caucus of the Alabama House is largely composed of legislators from two geographical categories – small city and country districts and urban black districts (legislators from a third category – middle-class suburban districts – make up a much smaller share of the caucus). These two categories are at opposite ends of the mean Democratic ideal point value (the 0-value on the y-axis), with legislators from urban black districts on the more liberal side and legislators from small city and country districts on the more conservative side.

By 2011-2012, however, the geographical composition of the Democratic caucus of the Alabama House has changed considerably. Due to the electoral demise of many Democratic legislators from small city and country districts, the percentage of Democratic legislators from this category declined dramatically and legislators from urban black districts became a much larger share of the chamber's Democratic caucus. Because they compose a larger share of the caucus in 2011-2012 than they do in 1999-2000, legislators from urban black districts are closer to their caucus's mean ideal point

value in 2011-2012 than they are in 1999-2000. Meanwhile, the relatively few Democratic legislators from small city and country districts that remain in the Alabama House in 2011-2012 are much further from their caucus's mean ideal point value than they are in 1999-2000.

Another chamber that exhibits much larger polarization levels in 2011-2012 than in 1999-2000 is the Michigan House. An examination of differences in the two plots for the Michigan House reveals a similar dynamic, albeit one that comports with Michigan's overall geographical profile instead of Alabama's. As can be seen, in 1999-2000 the Democratic caucus of the Michigan House is composed of large percentages of legislators from urban black districts and middle-class suburban districts and somewhat smaller percentages of legislators from outer suburban and small city and country districts. Legislators from urban black districts are considerably more liberal than the Democratic mean, legislators from outer suburban and small city and country districts are considerably more conservative, and legislators from middle-class suburban districts are collectively a bit on the conservative side but quite close to the mean. By 2011-2012, however, the presence of Democratic legislators from outer suburban and small city and country districts within the Democratic caucus has become so small that these two groups are not present in the plot. Because of the decline of these groups of legislators, the Democratic caucus in the Michigan House appears to have shifted to the left, with legislators from middle-class suburban districts now composing the caucus's

conservative flank and legislators from urban black districts much closer to the caucus's mean ideal point value than they are in 1999-2000.

Indeed, while each chamber's story is unique, one can see similar changes in other chambers that have polarized considerably, including the Minnesota House, Ohio House, and Pennsylvania House. In each of these chambers, the percentage of Democratic legislators from small city and country and deep rural districts declines between 1999-2000 and 2011-2012, while the percentage of Democratic legislators from more urban district categories (urban black districts in the case of the Ohio and Pennsylvania Houses; urban ethnic matrix and yuppie districts in the case of the Minnesota House) increases. Not coincidentally, legislators from these more urban district categories also come to occupy a position within the ideological spectrum of their caucuses that is closer to its center. One can surmise that this is because the caucuses have shifted somewhat to the left as a result of the attrition of their most conservative voices.

Up until this point, the chambers that have been discussed have been those of relatively slow-growing states whose geographical profiles are not rapidly changing. The transformations that have occurred in the chambers of more fast-growing states are far more convoluted and difficult to analyze because demographic change has to be considered alongside electoral change in accounting for differences in the relative prevalence of district categories within Democratic caucuses. The Nevada Assembly, for example, is a chamber that saw a huge increase in polarization between 1999-2000 and

2011-2012. It is also a chamber located in what has until recently been an exceptionally fast-growing state. Figure 4.3 shows that, in 1999-2000, the bulk of the Democratic caucus in the Nevada Assembly is constituted of legislators from middle-class suburban and outer suburban districts, both of which register a mean ideological position that is roughly on par with that of their caucus. Far smaller groups of Democratic legislators also exist from urban ethnic matrix and small city and country districts; the former are ideologically far more liberal than the caucus as a whole, while the latter are far more conservative.

Moving to 2011-2012, one can see that the geographical makeup of the Democratic caucus of the Nevada Assembly has changed enormously. Legislators from outer suburban and small city and country districts do not appear in the plot, while legislators from middle-class suburban districts occupy a very small circle in it. The bulk of Democratic legislators in the Nevada Assembly in 2011-2012 are from urban ethnic matrix districts, which naturally are near the middle of the caucus's ideological distribution. What has happened here? Stated succinctly, it appears that demographic changes and electoral changes have interacted. A huge influx of Hispanics into the Las Vegas area during the 1990s effectively turned numerous middle-class suburban districts into urban ethnic matrix districts, while outer suburban districts on the Las Vegas metropolitan fringe and small city and country districts in northern Nevada are now electing Republicans instead of Democrats. The overall effect has been that the percentages of legislators from middle-class suburban, outer suburban, and small city and

country districts within the Nevada Assembly's Democratic caucus have all declined while the percentage of legislators from urban ethnic matrix districts has risen substantially. While more difficult to disentangle, this story is nonetheless consistent with the hypothesis that was advanced earlier because the end result has been that the Democratic caucus in the Nevada Assembly has a more homogeneous geographical base, one that is more liberal and produces more liberal legislators.

In sum, Figure 4.3 reveals one important causal mechanism behind the growth of polarization in state legislatures – geographical sorting.[42] This conclusion is to some degree at odds with the claims of Shor and McCarty (2011). According to them, while the tendencies of Democrats and Republicans to represent districts with different political characteristics is partially responsible for the polarization of state legislatures, the much larger contributing factor has been what they call "intradistrict divergence," meaning the "difference between how Democrats and Republicans would represent the same district" (546). It is important to bear in mind, however, that Shor and McCarty model the geographical constituency in a completely different way than I do, and that their polarization scores for state legislators are only partly derived from roll-call votes.

Nonetheless, there is no question that geographical sorting, while an important component in any explanation of state legislative polarization, is on its own insufficient for the purposes of comprehensively explaining the phenomenon. There are clear

[42] Much more could be said about what Figure 4.3 reveals about each of the remaining state legislative chambers that were not discussed in this section of the chapter. This discussion would be rather redundant, however, and largely tangential to the overall point of the figure as well.

indications of this in Figure 4.3. For example, much like the chambers that were discussed earlier, the Illinois House experiences a fairly substantial decline in the number of Democratic legislators from small city and country districts between 1999-2000 and 2011-2012. But, as we saw in the previous section of the chapter, polarization levels in the Illinois House actually decline a bit between these two legislative sessions. This is despite the fact that some of the same trends discussed in reference to the Alabama and Michigan Houses (i.e., the movement of legislators from urban black districts closer to the mean ideal point value in their caucuses) are evident in the plots for Figure 4.3 Illinois House as well. It is not clear what explains this discrepancy.

Providing a comprehensive account of state legislative polarization would necessarily entail combining constituency variables such as the one promoted in this dissertation with institutional variables, a complicated task given that each state legislature has its own unique set of rules and procedures affecting roll-call voting. Such an account would also need to be based upon analyses of roll-call votes from more than just two time periods, as was done in this chapter. However, comprehensively explaining state legislative polarization is not the objective of this chapter. Instead, the objective has been to ascertain the link (if any) between geographical sorting and legislative polarization. As I have conclusively shown, that link lies in a number of areas, but most crucially, it lies in the electoral realignment that small city and country and deep rural districts have undergone.

CONCLUSION

The analyses of this chapter have resulted in a fairly eclectic (and, in some cases, unexpected) set of results. These results can be condensed into four basic observations. First, with a few exceptions, significant ideological heterogeneity across district categories is present primarily within Democratic state legislative caucuses; in Republican caucuses, geography simply does not do much of the work. Second, across nearly all of the chambers in the sample, the ideological orderings of Democratic legislators from different district categories are remarkably similar. Legislators from urban black districts and yuppie districts are consistently the most liberal in their caucuses, followed by legislators from the other urban district categories. Conversely, legislators from small city and country and deep rural districts are consistently the most conservative in their caucuses, followed by legislators from the suburban district categories. Third, while caution is warranted in drawing inferences based on ideal point estimates that are not in the same ideological space, the statistics measuring the ideological distance between Democrats and Republicans strongly suggest that most legislative chambers in the analyses were more polarized in 2011-2012 than they were in 1999-2000. Lastly, a comparison of the 1999-2000 and 2011-2012 results suggests one clear causal mechanism behind the apparent polarization of state legislative chambers – the decline of Democratic legislators from small city and country and deep rural districts.

Chapter Five: Toward a Policy-Based Understanding of State Legislative Roll-Call Voting: Geographical Cleavages, Policy Conflicts, and Legislative Alignments

Chapter Four provided strong evidence that intra-party geographical patterns in roll-call voting are remarkably similar across states. While cross-state differences do exist in the extent of ideological variation found within legislative party caucuses, these differences owe primarily to the kinds of microgeographical settings found within individual states rather than to macro-regional differences. Despite their undeniable complexity, the ideological distributions of contemporary state legislatures are to a significant degree the result of the interplay between just two factors: the distribution of district categories found within states and the patterns of partisan representation of these district categories. Contemporary trends of partisan polarization can, in turn, be partly understood as a consequence of the growing tendency of districts from different geographical categories to be represented by legislators from one political party.

These results beget many additional questions about the role of geography in producing alignments within contemporary state legislatures. In particular, the results of Chapter Four demonstrate that, in chamber after chamber, legislators from each of the geographical categories are ideologically positioned in roughly the same order within party caucuses. But what, exactly, are these positions all about? Why do Democratic legislators from small city and country districts so consistently exhibit mean ideologies that are far closer to those of most Republicans than are those of their co-partisans from urban black or yuppie districts? Conversely, why do Republicans legislators from middle-

class suburban districts tend to exhibit mean ideologies that are somewhat closer to those of most Democrats than are those of their co-partisans from deep rural districts?

In this chapter of the dissertation, I examine these questions by analyzing how the roll-call voting alignments of state legislators from different geographical categories vary depending on the policies on which the legislators are voting. More specifically, I point to a set of intra-party geographical alignment patterns that are likely to be evident in state legislative roll-call outcomes. Each of these geographical alignment patterns is related to one of a number of social cleavages that take on a distinct geographical expression within the American states. These cleavages are in turn related *to a distinct set of substantive policy disputes.* Thus, I theorize that conflicts over policy choices will evoke geographical cleavages at the societal level, which will then influence the way legislators from different geographical categories vote on particular issues.

The chapter begins with an extensive theoretical discussion in which I outline five different sub-state geographical cleavages, explaining their social origins and specifying the roll-call alignment patterns that should be associated with them. I also develop some basic hypotheses about the sorts of policy issues that are most likely to cause each type of roll-call alignment pattern to manifest itself in the state legislative setting. Following the theoretical section, I test my hypotheses using datasets of politically-consequential roll-call votes recorded between 2006 and 2012 in three state legislative chambers: the Illinois House, Pennsylvania House, and Virginia House. Each roll-call vote in the three datasets is tested to determine if a statistically significant intra-party geographical alignment

exists; votes that evince such alignments are further examined to determine if the alignments closely resemble the alignment patterns specified in the theoretical section of the chapter. I then proceed to examine the policy content of roll-call votes in order to determine if the hypothesized connection between policy content and voting alignment patterns exists.

The results of my initial analyses are mixed. While some hypotheses are confirmed, the overall thrust of the findings is that the empirical realities operating in contemporary state legislatures are more complex than my hypotheses might suggest. In order to better understand how my original hypotheses might be improved by a more nuanced understanding of the policymaking process in contemporary state legislatures, I examine several of the surprising findings of the chapter in greater depth. I conclude the chapter by summarizing how its results shed light on the findings of Chapter Four and suggesting ways in which the key concepts and ideas advanced in this chapter might be refined in future research.

SUB-STATE GEOGRAPHICAL CLEAVAGES AND THEIR ASSOCIATED ROLL-CALL ALIGNMENT PATTERNS

In this early section of the chapter, I lay out some hypotheses concerning five types of geographical cleavages that may manifest themselves in particular roll-call

alignment patterns inside modern state legislatures.[43] Each of the geographical cleavages to which I point is related to a social conflict in contemporary American politics that is expressed spatially and is thus reflected in the district categories at the center of this study. Some of these cleavages are explicitly spatial, whereas others are more fundamentally demographic but nonetheless happen to be expressed spatially. Additionally, some of these geographical cleavages are nationally significant and will therefore be recognizable to all who follow national politics; others are cleavages that only emerge at the state level and may be less familiar to those who do not closely follow state politics in the U.S.

The Core-Periphery Cleavage

It is a well-known fact that many states are the sites of intense competition between sub-state regions. Such competition can take several forms, one of which is the intense divide that exists in highly-populated states between large metropolitan areas and outlying hinterlands. I call this cleavage the core-periphery cleavage.[44] In his magisterial *American State Politics* (1956), V.O. Key, Jr. discussed sub-state core-periphery divides extensively, pointing to the polarity of such divides as the key factor determining their

[43] Throughout this chapter, the word "cleavages" is used to refer to social conflicts within the electorate or the population at large. The word "alignments," on the other hand, is used to refer to the way legislators from particular groups (in this case, district categories) vote on particular issues.

[44] I borrow the "core-periphery" term from a variety of excellent studies analyzing the roots of geographical voting patterns in the U.S. Congress (Bensel 1984, 1990, 2000; Trubowitz 1997; Sanders 1999). The dynamics to which these studies point are similar to the ones I discuss, though it is important to bear in mind that the term does take on a somewhat different meaning at the state level.

influence on a state's politics. According to Key, states with a single, economically-dominant metropolitan area (which he called "unimetropolitan states") produce the most pronounced core-periphery conflicts precisely because such conflicts in these states are bipolar in nature (i.e., they take the form of a single metropolitan area competing against the rest of the state).[45] This basic insight has been the starting point for a small number of subsequent studies of regionalism in state politics (Palmer 1972; Nardulli 1989; Atack 1989; Nowlan, Gove, and Winkel 2010; Pecorella and Stonecash 2012).

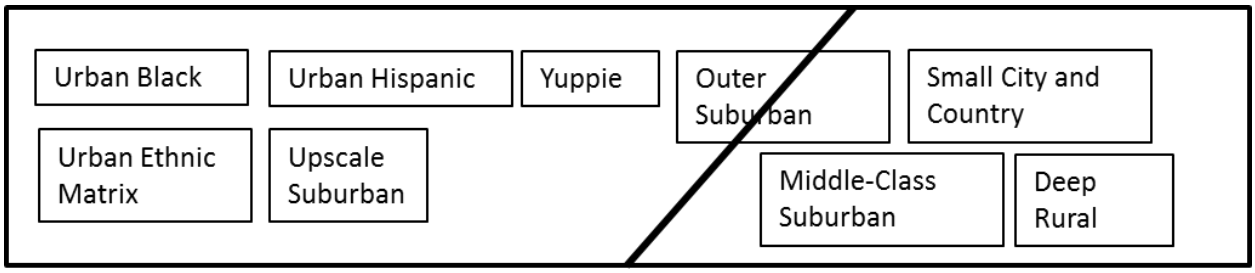
Importantly, while politicians from outlying territories in unimetropolitan states (e.g., downstate Illinois or upstate New York) will frequently characterize regional disagreements in their states as matters of regional identity or pride, the core political issues that evoke such divisions in state legislatures tend to be economic rather than cultural. Stated succinctly, metropolitan regions and outlying territories fight over limited state funds, particularly in the areas of education and transportation. Thus, it is reasonable to expect that these basic fiscal matters will be the core areas of dispute in roll-call votes exhibiting the core-periphery alignment pattern.

Within the categorical framework of this dissertation, there are five district categories that tend to be located in large metropolitan areas: urban black districts, urban Hispanic districts, urban ethnic matrix districts, yuppie districts, and upscale suburban districts. There are also three district categories that tend to be associated with small metropolitan areas or non-metropolitan areas: middle-class suburban districts, small city

[45] The two best examples of "unimetropolitan states" are Illinois and New York.

and country districts, and deep rural districts.[46] Thus, when the core-periphery cleavage makes itself felt in roll-call voting outcomes, it should manifest itself with legislators from the first five categories arrayed against legislators from the last three ones. This basic alignment of district categories is shown in Figure 5.1 (below). The final category – outer suburban districts – is sometimes associated with large metropolitan areas and sometimes not. It is therefore placed along the line separating the metropolitan and non-metropolitan categories.

Figure 5.1: Roll-Call Alignment Pattern Indicative of Core-periphery Cleavage



The City-Suburb Cleavage

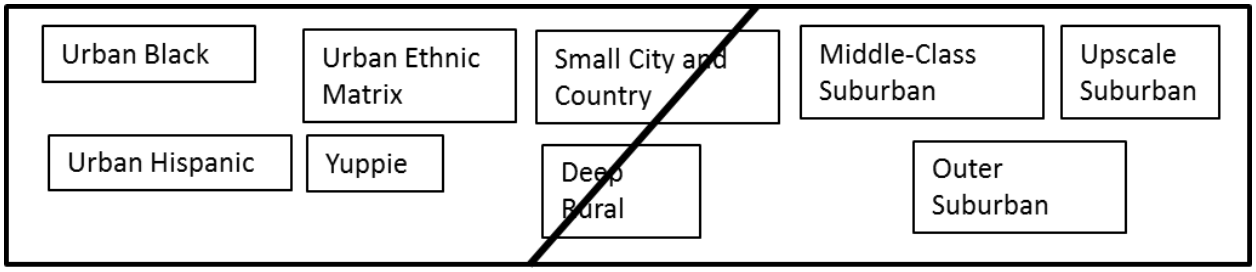
In states with large metropolitan areas, regional economic conflict can sometimes take a second form – conflict between central cities and suburban areas. Though they are in the same metropolitan network, central cities and their suburbs often have very different needs and populations. Moreover, since suburbs on the whole tend to be wealthier than central cities, state budgets frequently have the effect of redistributing

[46] Recall that middle-class suburban districts tend to exhibit higher urbanization scores, but lower metropolitanization scores, than outer suburban districts. This is because most middle-class suburban districts can be found in small cities rather than large metropolitan areas.

funds from the former to the latter, much to the displeasure of suburban constituencies (Orfield 2002). Thus, the same basic economic struggles that can take place between large metropolitan areas and outlying territories in state legislatures can also take place between cities and suburbs in the same metropolitan area. Naturally, the city-suburb cleavage will emerge in state legislative politics when urban legislators are pitted against suburban legislators. This alignment is demonstrated in Figure 5.2 (small city and country and deep rural districts are placed along the dividing line because their legislators would not have clear positions in disputes between cities and suburbs).[47]

[47] Importantly, the existence of a strong core/periphery divide within a state's politics does not preclude the existence of a strong urban/suburban divide as well. In fact, the two frequently coexist and their intersection occasionally makes for very complicated political scenarios. In Illinois, for example, school funding disputes have frequently served to unite legislators from relatively poor districts in inner-city Chicago and downstate Illinois against legislators from the wealthier Chicago suburbs (Nowlan, Gove, and Winkel 2010). For more complicated reasons, disputes over the funding of teacher pensions have usually resulted in a completely different alignment, one pitting legislators from downstate Illinois and the Chicago suburbs against legislators from the City of Chicago. Political conflict over transportation issues have usually comported with the ideal-typical core/periphery divide, though not always. Despite this complexity, however, legislative roll-call votes are not likely evoke the core/periphery cleavage and the city/suburb cleavage simultaneously. This is because roll-call votes are yes-or-no propositions, and bills pertaining to budget matters are likely to have been negotiated among legislators (with some winners and some loser) before the votes take place.

Figure 5.2: Roll-Call Alignment Pattern Indicative of City-suburb Cleavage



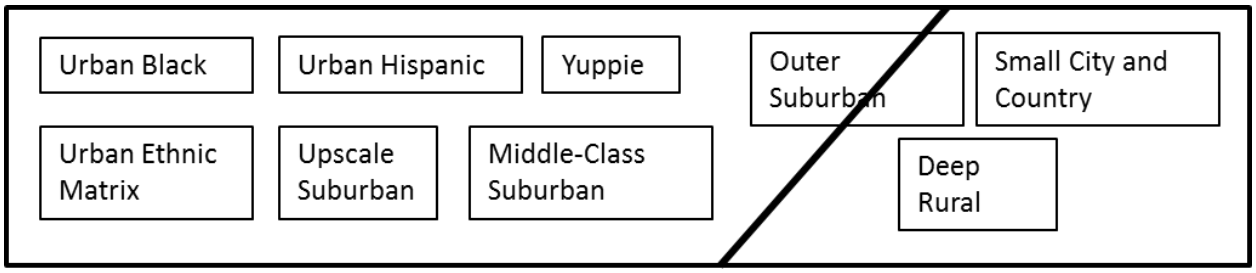
The Urban-Rural Cleavage

Like the core-periphery and city-suburb cleavages, urban-rural cleavages are explicitly spatial, in that they concern differences between geographically-defined communities. Unlike the first two cleavages, however, urban-rural cleavages are not related to differences between economic regions and tend not to involve economic policy issues. Instead, urban-rural cleavages concern genuine cultural differences between people who live in urban and rural areas. In recent years, a number of important studies of American politics have emphasized the fairly obvious and yet frequently-overlooked point that rural Americans have different lifestyles and different political perspectives than urban Americans (Walsh 2012; Gimpel and Karnes 2006; Gimpel and Shuknecht 2004). State legislatures frequently debate issues related to the regulation of private activities that provoke dramatically different reactions in urban and rural America. The most well-known example of such an issue is gun control, though there may be other such issues as well.

Naturally, urban-rural cleavages in roll-call voting patterns will take the form of legislators from urban districts voting against legislators from rural districts. As shown in

Chapter Two, only two district categories have average percentages of urban residents of less than 50%: small city and country districts and deep rural districts. A third category, outer suburban districts, evinces a fairly significant non-urban average percentage as well. Therefore, the alignment pattern most indicative of an urban-rural cleavage would pit small city and country and deep rural districts against most others, with outer suburban districts placed along the dividing line. This alignment is shown in Figure 5.3 (below).

Figure 5.3: Roll-Call Alignment Indicative of Urban-rural Cleavage



The Post-Industrial Cleavage

The post-industrial cleavage is related to a series of societal developments first noticed by Bell (1973) in his classic book *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*. In the book, Bell predicted that the final decades of the twentieth century would witness a transition in advanced democracies from economies reliant upon traditional industries to economies reliant upon services and information. These economic changes, Bell believed, would result in the large-scale growth of a new socioeconomic class in advanced societies – well-educated professional workers. As numerous commentators and scholars have observed, Bell's predictions about the impending transformation of the

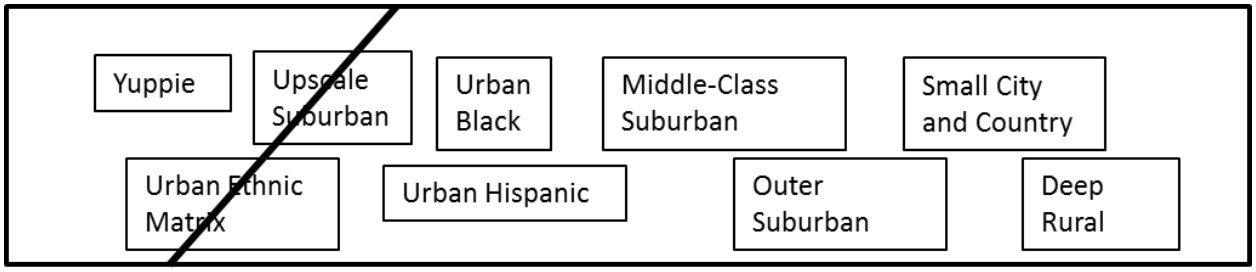
American socioeconomic structure have clearly come true (Brooks 2000; Kotkin 2000; Florida 2002). Moreover, in recent years, scholars have noticed that the growth of the information economy that Bell predicted has occurred in ways that are highly geographically uneven, with information-sector employment and levels of human capital diverging across places (Moretti 2012; Berry and Glaeser 2005).

The growth and geographical concentration of the post-industrial economy has redounded in an important new geographical cleavage in contemporary American politics, one between places that have become embedded in the post-industrial economy (i.e., places exhibiting high levels of information-sector employment and human capital) and places that have not. There are at least two types of state policy areas that seem especially likely to evoke post-industrial divides in state legislatures – energy/environmental policy and morality policy. With respect to environmental/energy policy, because post-industrial economies are far less reliant upon energy consumption than are traditional industries, it seems likely that legislators from places defined by post-industrialism would take a kinder view toward strict environmental regulations than would legislators from places in which the post-industrial economy is less of a force. With respect to morality policy, because the post-industrial economy is intimately linked with higher education levels, and higher education levels are in turn closely associated with more liberal views on "morality policy" issues (Camobreco and Barnello 2002; Brewer and Stonecash 2008), it is reasonable to expect that legislators from post-

industrial areas will exhibit much more liberal views on these sorts of issues than legislators from other areas.

In terms of the framework of this dissertation, the district category most closely associated with the post-industrial economy is the yuppie category. Human capital levels in the yuppie category are far higher than in any of the other nine categories. The one category that comes close to reaching the yuppie category in this regard is the upscale suburban category, but it is best regarded as intermediate between the yuppie category and all others in terms of post-industrial influence. Additionally, urban ethnic matrix districts are frequently composed of many diverse neighborhoods, some of which include large populations of well-educated professionals. Thus, the alignment most indicative of a post-industrial cleavage would pit yuppie districts against most others, with upscale suburban districts and urban ethnic matrix districts placed along the dividing line.

Figure 5.4: Roll-Call Alignment Indicative of Post-Industrial Cleavage



The Racial Cleavage

Few would disagree with the claim that race has been an extremely significant (if not *the* most significant) social cleavage throughout American history. In its cursory treatment of racial issues, this dissertation has emphasized an admittedly unoriginal point

– one of the chief reasons that race continues to play such a dominant role in American politics is because the distribution of racial populations across the United States is so geographically uneven. High rates of racial segregation in the United States amplify the salience of race in perceptions of American communities, likely among most Americans but almost certainly among most politicians.

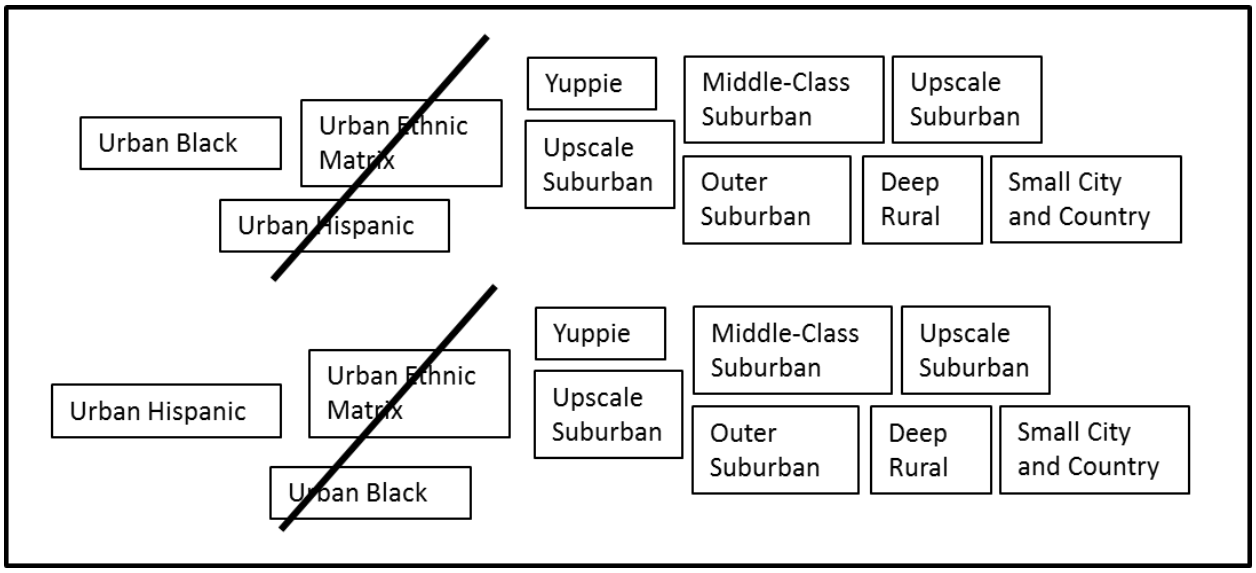
As discussed in the introductory chapter, high rates of racial segregation render racial representation and place-based representation indistinguishable in many cases. When legislators representing majority-black or majority-Hispanic districts sponsor bills designed to help racial minorities at large, they are effectively representing their geographical constituencies as well. Thus, we should expect racial cleavages in society to manifest themselves in geographically-defined roll-call voting alignments when the policy issues at hand bear two characteristics: 1) they are of particular importance to racial and ethnic minority groups; 2) they evoke significant differences of opinion between minority groups and white Americans.

There is no shortage of issues that meet these two criteria to some degree. With respect to African-Americans, important examples include highly racialized policy areas such as social welfare policy and criminal justice policy. Numerous studies have demonstrated the extent to which policy disputes over social welfare and criminal justice issues are linked to the status of African-Americans in American society, both because of the ways in which stereotypes of African-Americans shape public opinion in these areas as well as because of the degree to which African-American communities are

disproportionately affected by policy changes in them (Gilens 2000; Alexander 2010).It thus seems likely that pieces of legislation pertaining to social welfare and criminal justice policy will occasionally produce roll-call divisions within Democratic caucuses in which legislators from district categories defined by large black populations (i.e., urban black districts) will be pitted against legislators from other district categories. With respect to Hispanic communities, similar issues might include immigration policy and language policy.

There is no reason to assume that legislators from urban black districts and urban Hispanic districts will necessarily align on issues of importance to their respective racial communities. While this may occur at times, research has shown that Black and Hispanic communities are sometimes in conflict as well (Mindiola, Niemann, and Rodriguez 2002; Vaca 2004; Kaufmann 2004). Thus, there are two roll-call alignments indicative of racial cleavages: one in which legislators from urban black districts are the sole district category in the minority voting bloc and one in which urban Hispanic districts have that position. In both cases, the other district category is placed along the dividing line along with urban ethnic matrix districts.

Figure 5.5: Roll-Call Alignments Indicative of Racial Cleavage



DATA AND METHODS

Having developed some hypotheses concerning the ways in which five types of geographical cleavages may manifest themselves in particular roll-call alignment patterns, I now move to testing the validity of these hypotheses using roll-call data from three state legislative chambers from 2006 to 2012.

The roll-call data used for the analyses of this chapter were retrieved from the website of Project Vote Smart, a non-profit dedicated to informing American citizens about the records of their elected officials. Project Vote Smart's Key Votes Program selects roll-call votes that have been determined by a set of experts (usually political scientists or political journalists working in a state) to have met a set of criteria indicating

political significance.[48] Using the roll-call votes selected by Project Vote Smart (as opposed to the much larger datasets that were analyzed in Chapter Four) has advantages and disadvantages, but on the whole the former outweigh the latter for the purposes of this chapter. While analyzing larger datasets would provide a far greater sample of roll-call votes, many of these would be procedural or amendatory votes that have little substantive policy significance. Going through all of the roll-call votes to determine policy significance would be an excruciatingly time-consuming process. The roll-call votes selected by Project Vote Smart's staff, on the other hand, are much more likely to be related to important policy disputes. Since policy content is an essential component of this chapter, I choose to foresake a greater *n* value so as to hopefully garner more meaningful findings.

The three state legislative chambers I examine for this chapter are the Illinois House, Pennsylvania House, and Virginia House. These states were chosen because they are geographically diverse: in all three states, at least eight of the nine geographical categories can be found. Moreover, each includes all or parts of a large metropolitan area as well as substantial rural territory. Additionally, as seen in Chapter Four, the Illinois House and Virginia House exhibit rather low levels of party polarization, so the chances that geographical differences in roll-call voting patterns will be found within them are higher.

[48] To learn more about the Key Votes program, go to Project Vote Smart's website (www.votesmart.org).

My strategy for determining whether individual roll-call votes exhibit significant geographical alignments is to search for such alignments *within* party caucuses. I choose this strategy because, as the results of Chapter Four clearly showed, party has become the dominant influence on roll-call voting in contemporary state legislatures and the role of geography, while certainly important, is secondary nonetheless. Thus, to the extent that the geographical constituency plays an independent role in shaping voting decisions on a particular roll-call vote, that role is most easily detected within rather than across party lines.

PARTY-LINE VOTES, GEOGRAPHICAL VOTES, AND GEOGRAPHICAL ALIGNMENT PATTERNS

An important first step in isolating roll-call votes evincing significant intra-party geographical alignments is to separate out those roll-call votes for which party is the overwhelming influence and to subject the remainder of the votes to tests measuring the intra-party association between geography and vote choice. Accordingly, party difference scores – scores measuring the difference between the percentage of Democrats and percentage of Republicans who vote "yes" on a particular bill – were calculated for all votes in the three datasets. Votes exhibiting party difference scores of greater than 90% manifest a sharply partisan alignment and were therefore not examined for intra-party geographical variation.

For those roll-call votes that exhibited party difference scores of less than 90%, the within-party relationship between geography and vote choice was examined via the

Fisher's Exact Test. The Fisher's Exact Test is a statistical test of association between categorical variables that is similar to the more well-known Chi Square Test but is preferred when sample sizes are small. It tests the null hypothesis that no relationship exists between the rows and columns of a contingency table (in this case, the rows indicate the category of the districts that legislators represent and the columns indicate whether the legislators voted yes or no on a given roll-call vote). For each roll-call vote, the sample was split by party affiliation and two separate Fisher's Exact Tests were conducted. Each test yielded a p-value indicating the statistical significance of the within-party relationship between geographical category and vote choice.

Table 5.1 (next page) classifies each roll-call vote in the dataset according to its party difference score and the results of the Fisher's Exact Tests. "Strict party-line votes" are those votes that exhibit party difference scores of greater than 90%. Votes that *do not* reach the 90% threshold for being considered a "strict party-line vote," but that *do* evince a statistically-significant ($p<.05$) within-party association between district category and vote choice as per the Fisher's Exact Test, are considered "geographical votes." In some cases, the statistically-significant within-party association only occurs among Democrats, while in other cases it only occurs among Republicans; in a few cases it occurs within both party caucuses. The party caucus(es) within which the geographical alignments are statistically significant are indicated in columns three through five. Finally, roll-call votes that do not meet the criteria for being considered "strict party-line votes" and also do not

exhibit statistically-significant within-party geographical alignments are classified as "other" (column six).

Table 5.1: Classification of Roll-Call Votes in Three Chambers Based on the Influences of Party and Geography, 2006-2012

	Strict Party-Line Votes	**Geographical Votes**			**Other**	**Total**
		Within Dem Caucus Only	Within GOP Caucus Only	Within Both Caucuses		
Illinois House	6 (7%)	33 (36%)	4 (4%)	16 (18%)	32 (35%)	**91 (100%)**
Pennsylvania House	12 (18%)	14 (22%)	17 (26%)	3 (5%)	19 (29%)	**65 (100%)**
Virginia House	3 (4%)	18 (23%)	7 (9%)	9 (12%)	40 (52%)	**77 (100%)**

In assessing the results of this table, one finds a variety of patterns across the three chambers. In the Illinois and Virginia Houses, there are many more roll-call votes evincing a significant geographical alignment inside the Democratic Caucuses than inside the Republican Caucuses. In the Pennsylvania House, on the other hand, the percentage of geographical votes inside the Republican caucus is slightly higher (recall from Chapter Four that the Pennsylvania House is one of a few chambers – along with the Illinois House – that exhibits ideological heterogeneity across district categories inside its Republican caucus). Additionally, the Pennsylvania House exhibits a higher percentage of strict party-line votes than the other two chambers. This is not surprising given that it is a much more polarized chamber (as also shown in Chapter Four). Finally, in all three

chambers, a large number of votes are neither strictly party-line nor geographical, but rather are classified as "other." Part of the reason for why such a large number of roll-call votes are classified as "other" is because the criteria used to delineate partisan votes (and, to a lesser extent, geographical votes) are quite difficult to meet.

From this point forward, I focus on the 121 geographical votes in the three roll-call datasets. Table 5.2 (next page) classifies each of these votes according to which roll-call alignment pattern it most resembles. Measuring how closely roll-call votes approximate ideal-typical alignment patterns was accomplished by calculating Pearson's correlation values between the votes in the datasets and hypothetical votes in which every legislator voted according to his district category's alignment in each of the five alignment patterns.[49] Roll-call votes were then classified as being most closely associated with the alignment pattern producing the highest correlation value. In cases where no alignment pattern yielded a correlation value of greater than 0.4, the votes were classified as "other."

[49] Correlations were not calculated for roll-call votes in which there was not a sufficiently large (n>2) number of legislators from a consequential category. For example, correlations measuring how closely votes approximate the post-industrial alignment weren't calculated for Republican caucuses because none of the chambers in the dataset have Republican legislators from yuppie districts.

Table 5.2: Alignment Patterns of Geographical Votes in Ilinois, Pennsylvania, and Virginia Houses, 2006-2012

		Core/ Periphery	City/ Suburb	Urban/ Rural	Post-Industrial	Racial	Other	Total
IL House	Dem Caucus	13	4	3	1	12	16	**49**
	GOP Caucus	8	2	7	0	0	3	**20**
PA House	Dem Caucus	7	0	1	1	0	8	**17**
	GOP Caucus	5	0	7	0	0	8	**20**
VA House	Dem Caucus	17	0	4	5	0	1	**27**
	GOP Caucus	4	0	3	0	0	9	**16**
Total		**54**	**6**	**25**	**7**	**12**	**45**	

Examining this table, we find that the core-periphery alignment pattern is easily the most common alignment pattern that emerges across all three legislative chambers. The urban-rural alignment pattern is the second most common, but it is only half as common as the core-periphery pattern. The frequency of the core-periphery and urban-rural alignment patterns is partly the result of the fact that these are the only two alignment patterns that can usually be found within both Democratic and Republican caucuses. If Democratic caucuses were considered alone, the core-periphery alignment would still easily be the most frequent alignment, though the urban-rural alignment would fall to third place after the racial alignment.

The results for the remaining three alignment patterns are surprising in that each is exclusively (or primarily) found in only one of the three legislative chambers. Most significantly, the racial alignment is very common in the Illinois House, nearly tying with the core-periphery alignment for being the most common. However, it appears to be non-existent in the Pennsylvania and Virginia Houses. Also present in the Illinois House (though to a much smaller degree) and not present in the other two chambers is the city-suburb alignment. Similarly, the post-industrial alignment is a clear presence in the Virginia House, but its existence in the other two chambers is scant at best. Possible explanations for the large differences in the prevalence of these three alignment patterns across the three chambers will be explored later in the chapter.

BRINGING IN POLICY CONTENT

Here, I shift gears to examining the relationship between policy content and the kinds of alignments evinced by the roll-call votes in the three datasets. In particular, I seek to answer two questions: 1) to what extent do the policy areas being voted upon determine whether roll-call votes occur along party lines or geographical lines?; 2) among votes that cleave the parties geographically, what is the association between the policy areas being voted upon and the kinds of geographical alignment patterns that emerge?

To facilitate the policy-based analysis, I carefully examined all of the votes in my roll-call datasets and classified them according to their respective policy areas. The classification scheme I used was one that I developed specifically for the purpose of the

data at hand. While this classification scheme includes some general policy areas that are frequently included in state policy typologies (i.e., education, transportation, health care, etc.), it also includes more specific policy areas that made unusually frequent appearances in my roll-call datasets. For example, gun control, tobacco control, and gambling regulation were the sources of an unusually large number of roll-call votes despite being fairly specific policy topics (probably because states were legislating heavily in these topics during the time period at hand); as a result, they were given their own categories.

Table 5.3 (next page) shows the number of number of strict party-line votes, geographical votes, and "other" votes (classified in the same way as Table 5.1) in each of the policy areas in my policy typology. The policy areas are ordered from most numerous to least numerous, with the residual category ("other") at the end of the table. The sorts of issues encompassed within most of the policy areas included in the table are fairly self-evident, with the possible exception of "morality policy," a term increasingly used in the public policy field to refer to a set of policy issues with a fairly distinctive set of attributes (Mooney 2001; Mooney and Schuldt 2008). For a roll-call vote to be classified as pertaining to morality policy, it needed to be *directly and explicitly* linked to societal conflict over "first principles" – deeply-held values over which no societal agreement exists (Mooney 2001). The two issues that constituted the majority of morality policy

roll-call votes concerned abortion and gay marriage, though a smaller number also concerned stem cell research and the role of religion in education.[50]

Table 5.3: Party-Line Votes, Geographical Votes, and Policy Content

Policy Area	Strict Party-Line Votes	Geographical Votes			Other	Total
		Within Dem Caucus Only	Within GOP Caucus Only	Within Both Caucuses		
Budget/fiscal	8	4	4	0	13	29
Morality	0	10	2	5	10	27
Criminal justice	0	7	2	0	8	17
Transportation	2	2	2	4	6	16
Education	0	6	2	0	7	15
Elections/voting	6	4	0	0	5	15
Gun control	0	4	0	9	1	14
Environment/energy	0	3	6	0	4	13
Health care	2	2	2	2	2	10
Gambling Regulation	0	6	1	1	2	10
Government operations	1	1	0	3	5	10
Immigration	0	5	0	1	3	9
Tobacco control	0	2	1	1	3	7
Social welfare	0	3	0	0	2	5
Labor/employment	0	1	1	0	2	4
Lawsuit reform	1	0	0	0	2	3
Other	1	5	5	2	16	29

[50] Capital punishment is sometimes considered a morality policy issue and sometimes not (Mooney and Lee 1999). However, because of its association with racial cleavages in American society, I have chosen to classify it as an example of criminal justice policy. Similarly, gambling policy is sometimes classified as a morality policy, but an admittedly cursory examination of state legislative debates over gambling policy suggests that such debates more frequently revolve around economic rather than moral considerations.

Scanning the table, we find intriguing differences across the policy areas in the ratio of the number of strict party-line votes they produce to the number of geographical votes they produce. The two areas that are most likely to produce strict party-line votes are budget/fiscal policy and elections/voting policy. Interestingly, in both of these policy areas, the overall percentage of strict party-line votes is not overwhelming and a significant number of geographical votes are also recorded. Indeed, it is somewhat surprising that a policy area with partisan consequences as large as elections/voting policy produces as many intra-party geographical votes as it does.

In contrast to budget/fiscal policy and elections/voting policy, there are a set of policy areas that produce no strict party-line votes and in which geographical votes are substantially more common. The two most prominent of these areas are morality policy and gun control, which produce a larger total number of geographical votes than the other categories. The breakdown for gun control votes is particularly impressive: of the fourteen gun control votes in the dataset, nine produce statistically-significant intra-party geographical alignments for both party caucuses and an additional four produce such alignments only among Democrats. The results for morality policy votes are only slightly less striking: of the 27 morality policy votes, seventeen are geographical votes of some kind.

Additionally, many other policy areas account for a smaller number of roll-call votes than morality policy or gun control policy, but nonetheless appear to evoke roll-call votes that are frequently geographical. These include education, health care,

transportation, environment/energy, gambling regulation, immigration, and tobacco control. However, a close examination of these votes reveals a fairly surprising finding – most of these votes have little to do with conflicts over the regional distribution of resources. For example, geographical votes over education policy often concern topics such as school bullying or truancy, as opposed to issues with significant fiscal impacts. Similarly, geographical votes over health care policy primarily concern the regulation of pharmaceutical products or health-related activities, not the state Medicaid budget or similar topics. Geographical votes over transportation policy and gambling policy, on the other hand, are plainly related to geographically-based economic competition. But these votes are fairly uncommon in comparison with the number of geographical votes over morality policy and gun control.

The next question is, what kind of geographical alignments are each of the policy areas most likely to produce? Table 5.4 (p. 170) cross-tabulates the geographical alignment patterns of each of the geographical roll-call votes against their policy content. The table provides mixed results for the hypotheses that were laid out at the beginning of the chapter. The general assumption that there would be a clear link between the policy content of roll-call votes and the kind of alignment patterns they produce is not perfectly borne out. To be sure, there are some clear trends that emerge. For example, criminal justice policy and social welfare policy are two of the most frequent policy areas that evoke a racial alignment, and morality policy and environmental policy are the topics of several roll-call votes producing a post-industrial alignment, much as was predicted. Still,

a glance at the columns for the core-periphery and urban-rural alignments suggests that they are associated with many policy areas

Table 5.4: Geographical Alignment Patterns and Policy Content

	Core/ Periphery		City/ Suburb		Urban/ Rural		Post-Industrial		Racial		Other	
	Dems	GOP	Dems	GOP	Dems	GOP	Dems	GOP	Dems	GOP	Dems	GOP
Budget/ Fiscal		1					1		1		2	3
Morality	6	2			5	2	2		1		1	3
Criminal Justice	2					1	1		2		2	1
Transportation	1	1	1		1	4					3	1
Education	2								3		1	2
Environment/ Energy	1	4					1				1	1
Elections/Voting	1								1		2	
Gun Control	12	4							1			5
Health care	3	2				1					1	1
Gambling							1				6	3
Government Operations	1	2				1					3	
Immigration	4		1	1			1					
Tobacco Control	2				1	1					1	1
Lawsuit reform												
Social Welfare									2		1	
Labor/ Employment			1	1								1
Other	2		1		1	7			1		2	

The results for the core-periphery alignment pattern are particularly confounding. I originally hypothesized that the core-periphery alignment pattern would manifest itself on issues concerning regional economic conflict, but the table shows that, of the many policy areas that produce a core-periphery alignment, the most common one by far is gun control. Indeed, it is quite striking that the only alignment pattern within Democratic caucuses caused by gun control votes is the core-periphery alignment pattern. This is in contrast to my hypothesis that roll-call votes over gun control issues would produce urban-rural alignment patterns, not a core-periphery alignment patterns. It appears that, contrary to much reporting in the news media, gun control is not best described as an issue that provokes conflict between urban and rural areas (at least not at the elite level). Instead, it is better described as an issue that provokes conflict between large metropolitan areas and all other areas. This is indeed a subtle distinction, but it is an important one nonetheless.

Many of the surprising results described above call for greater consideration and explanation. In the remainder of this chapter, I examine a few of the questions raised by these results. First, I examine why such a large disparity exists across the three chambers in the prevalence of votes exhibiting racial and post-industrial alignment patterns. Then, I consider why so few of the geographical votes in the datasets concern regional economic conflict, as I suspected would be the case.

WHY DOES THE RACIAL ALIGNMENT PATTERN ONLY EMERGE IN THE ILLINOIS HOUSE?

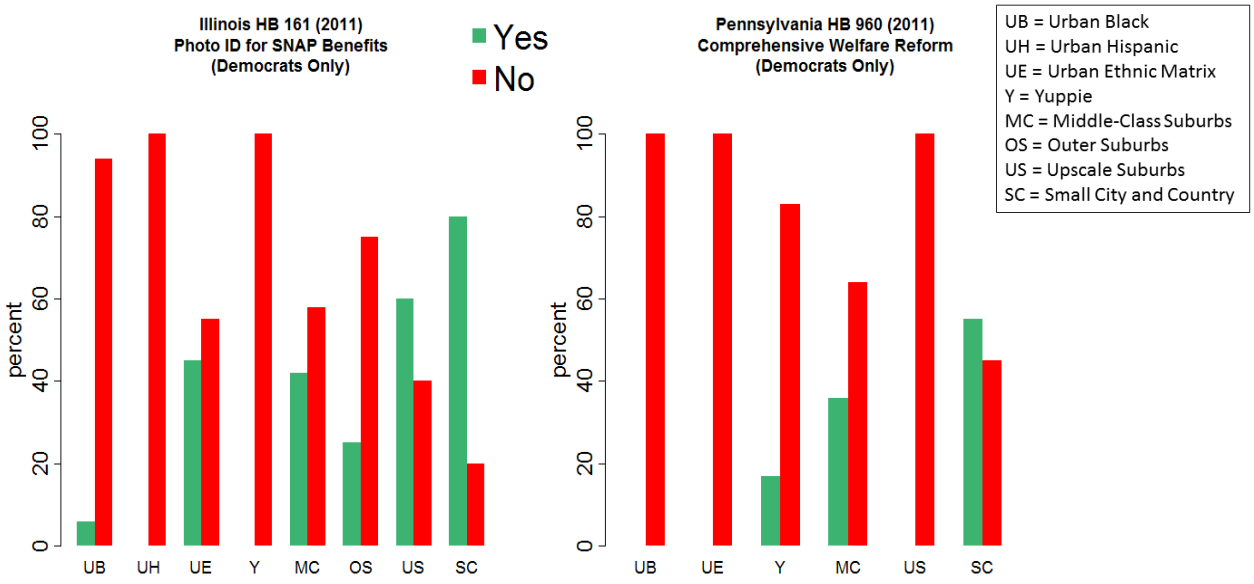
The question of why twelve votes exhibiting the racial alignment pattern can be found in the Illinois House, while none are found in the other two chambers, is indeed intriguing. All three states in which these chambers are located are very racially diverse, with large African-American populations in particular. While Illinois does have a much larger Hispanic population than either Pennsylvania or Virginia, none of the roll-call votes in the Illinois House exhibit an alignment in which legislators from urban Hispanic districts vote differently from legislators from all other categories. Thus, state demographics cannot serve as a good explanation for why the racial alignment pattern is only found in one of the three chambers.

I offer two possible reasons for why the racial alignment pattern is much more prevalent in the Illinois House than in the Pennsylvania or Virginia Houses, though there are likely to be others. First, similar policy issues seem to provoke a starker racial divide within the Democratic caucus of the Illinois House than within the Democratic caucuses of the other two chambers. A fairly good example of this phenomenon can be seen in Figure 5.6 (next page). It shows voting alignments within the Democratic caucuses of the Illinois House and Pennsylvania House on two social welfare policy questions with clear racial overtones.[51] In the Illinois House, the roll-call vote in question concerns a proposal to begin the process of creating a photo ID for beneficiaries of Illinois' Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP). In the Pennsylvania House, the roll-call vote in

[51] Recall that I hypothesized that conflict over social welfare policy would provoke the racial cleavage the early sections of this chapter.

question was a fairly comprehensive welfare reform bill, which included (among other things) the implementation of a new income eligibility tracking system and random drug tests for beneficiaries who had previously been convicted of drug-related offenses. Thus, the long-term goal of both of these bills was to cut costs to state welfare programs by removing certain people from welfare rolls.

Figure 5.6: Outcomes among Democrats for Votes on Social Welfare Policy in the Illinois and Pennsylvania Houses, 2011



In comparing the two plots in Figure 5.6, we find that the Illinois vote more closely approximates the racial alignment pattern than the Pennsylvania vote. While legislators from urban black districts in both chambers are overwhelmingly opposed to the respective bills, support among many of the other categories is higher in the Illinois House than it is in the Pennsylvania House. It is not surprising, therefore, that the correlation analysis detected the vote in the Illinois House, but not in the Pennsylvania House, as most closely associated with a racial alignment pattern. It bears reiterating

that the Pennsylvania House is more polarized than the Illinois House, so Democrats tend to be more united on controversial issues like changes to public assistance benefits, thereby diminishing the likelihood that intra-party geographical alignments will emerge. To be sure, this is a fairly technical explanation that provokes a more difficult question – given that they pertain to a similar policy issue, *why* did these two roll-call votes not produce near-identical alignments among Democrats in the two chambers? Answering this question would require an in-depth examination of the politics of social welfare policy in Illinois and Pennsylvania, something that is beyond the scope of this chapter.[52]

Thus, part of the explanation for differences in the frequency of votes exhibiting the racial alignment pattern across the three chambers is that similar policy issues evoke stronger geographical alignment patterns in the Illinois House than in the other two chambers. A second possible reason for why such votes have been more frequent in the Illinois House is that, in the time period at hand, the sorts of policy proposals most likely to evoke the racial alignment pattern within Democratic caucuses (e.g., proposals to shrink public assistance benefits) appear to have been much more common in Illinois than in the other two states. This may initially seem surprising, given the fact that Illinois state government has been consistently controlled by Democrats throughout the time period at hand while divided government has been the norm in Pennsylvania and

[52] An important caveat to this interpretation is that, while these two bills are in the same general policy area, they are not identical. In particular, the Pennsylvania bill is a more far-reaching bill than the Illinois bill. Thus, an alternative explanation for why support for the Illinois bill is higher among Democrats representing most geographical categories is simply that the legislation is not as consequential for the safety net in the state.

Virginia. However, it makes more sense when one considers the budget challenges facing each of these states. While nearly all American states (including Pennsylvania and Virginia) have faced large budget deficits since the 2008 financial downturn, the problems in most states have paled in comparison to those of Illinois. With annual unpaid bills regularly exceeding $8 billion and a $100 billion pension liability, Illinois has been considered to be "in a a league of its own" in terms of its fiscal problems, according to a report by J.P. Morgan (Barro 2011).

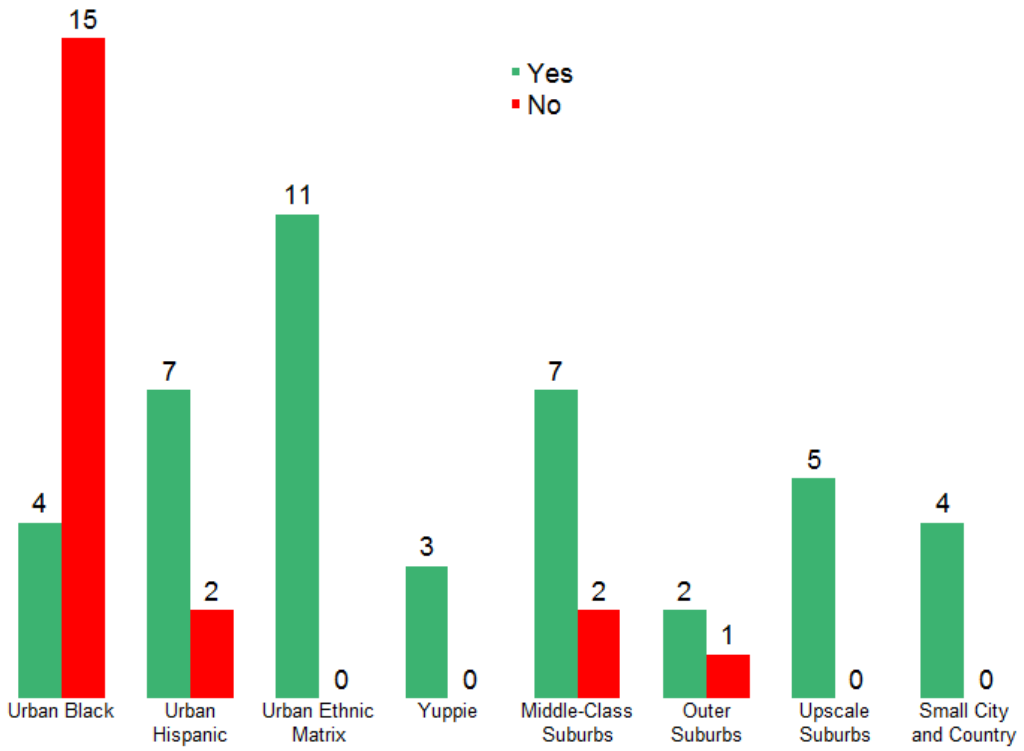
Illinois' massive fiscal crisis has forced its leaders to push through policies that would have once been unthinkable for Democrats to pursue, including substantial cuts to education and health care. These cuts have drawn strong opposition from legislators from urban black districts, and have consequently prompted a number of roll-call votes exhibiting strong racial alignments inside the Illinois House's Democratic Caucus. The most significant of these votes was a comprehensive bill in 2012 designed to slash $1.6 billion from the state's annual Medicaid expenses. The bill included many cuts to basic health services for the poor, including prescription drug payments, dental care, vision care, and medical equipment repair. Legislators from urban black districts passionately argued against the bill, contending that the state had options for eliminating its debt aside from cutting health services for the poor. "There's lots of things, ladies and gentlemen, we can do rather than putting senior citizens and disabled people out on the street without

having access to their health care," said one Democrat from an urban black district in Chicago's South Side during the floor debate on the bill.[53]

Figure 5.7 (next page) displays the roll-call voting results for the Illinois Medicaid Bill by geographical category within the Democratic caucus of the Illinois House. This vote more closely approximates an ideal-typical racial alignment pattern than nearly any other vote in the dataset for all three states. As can be seen, legislators from district categories that often align with legislators from urban black districts (e.g., urban ethnic matrix districts, yuppie districts) parted company with legislators from urban black districts on this particular vote and supported the large cuts to Medicaid. These results show how, in times of fiscal scarcity, the only legislators who are likely to vote against substantial cuts to social services are those who believe such cuts will yield disproportionately negative consequences for their geographical constituencies. The ultimate results of such perceptions are often roll-call votes exhibiting sharply racial voting alignments.

[53] This quote originally appeared in Dunn 2012.

Figure 5.7: SB 2840 – Illinois Medicaid Reform (2012 - Democrats Only)



WHY DOES THE POST-INDUSTRIAL ALIGNMENT PATTERN DISPROPORTIONATELY EMERGE IN THE VIRGINIA HOUSE?

As shown earlier in this chapter, the post-industrial alignment pattern appears to make fairly regular appearances in the roll-call votes of the Virginia House, but not in those of the Illinois and Pennsylvania Houses. This disparity has everything to do with how the increasingly-dominant metropolitan region in Virginia -- the southern section of the Washington, D.C. area that is known locally as "NoVa" (northern Virginia) – differs from the dominant metropolitan regions of Illinois and Pennsylvania. Unlike Chicago, Philadelphia, or Pittsburgh, NoVa is a region that is overwhelmingly defined by post-industrialism. Anchored by employment in the federal government and numerous high-

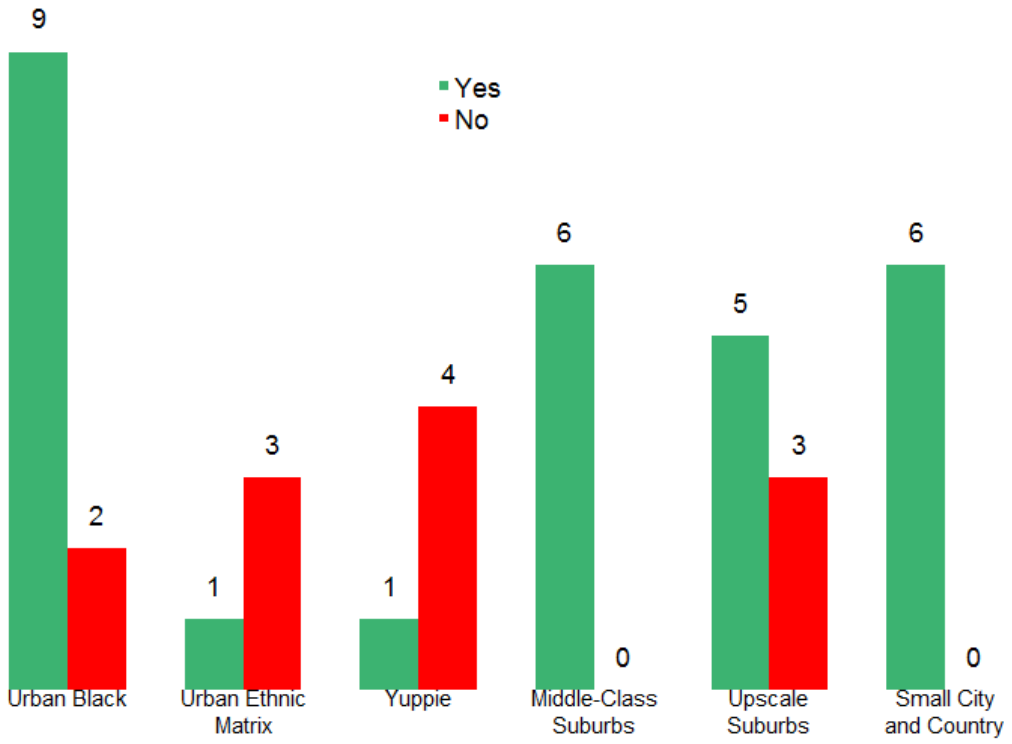
tech start-up firms, and with a workforce exhibiting exceptionally high educational attainment levels, NoVa is an area in which the information economy is dominant. Indeed, a recent study concludes that the Washington, D.C. area has by far the highest ratio of economic services produced to economic goods produced in the country (Florida 2013). Thus, a very reasonable case can be made that NoVa is a part of America's most post-industrial metropolitan area.

NoVa's strongly post-industrial nature is reflected in the fact that yuppie districts constitute a larger percentage of districts in the Virginia House than they do in the Illinois and Pennsylvania Houses. Additionally, it appears that the divide on morality policy in the Virginia House is more likely to take on a post-industrial dimension than it is elsewhere. This is because, in the Virginia House, Democratic legislators from urban black districts tend to be quite conservative on morality policy, thereby causing them to side with their co-partisans from middle-class suburban and small city and country districts over their co-partisans from yuppie and upscale suburban districts on such issues.

A good example of this is the 2006 vote in the Virginia House of Delegate to amend the Virginia Constitution to define marriage as between a man and a woman. Figure 5.8 (next page) shows the alignments of Democratic legislators from different geographical categories on this issue. These results demonstrate fairly clearly the way in which the post-industrial alignment pattern often emerges in Virginia. Stated simply, Democratic legislators from the yuppie districts and upscale suburban districts of NoVa are more ideologically isolated than are legislators from the same categories in other

states; as a result, the post-industrial alignment is more pronounced in Virginia than it is in other places.

Figure 5.8 : Proposal to Amend Virginia Constitution to Define Marriage as Between a Man and a Woman (2006 – Democrats Only)



REGIONAL ECONOMIC CONFLICT: WHERE IS IT IN THE ROLL-CALL DATA?

As discussed earlier, one of the more surprising results of this chapter is that, contra my hypotheses, regional economic conflict is not a common cause of roll-call votes exhibiting statistically significant intra-party geographical alignments. While a sizeable number of geographical roll-call votes are in policy areas that account for a large share of state budgets (i.e., health care and education), these particular votes tend to concern topics that have few fiscal or economic ramifications. And while the

geographical votes over transportation and gambling policy in the sample are clearly related to regional economic conflicts, these votes are not particularly common when compared to the much larger number of geographical votes concerning abortion, gay marriage, school prayer, gun control, and other such hot-button issues. The fact that conflicts over the regional distribution of resources account for only a small share of roll-call votes in the sample is not easily reconciled with extant scholarship that has emphasized the primacy of regional economic competition in American state politics. How are we to explain the relative absence of roll-call votes that reflect this competition?

While it is not clear why this disparity exists, one likely reason is that there simply aren't that many roll-call votes over regional economic issues in contemporary state legislatures. Unlike roll-call votes over abortion or gay marriage, comprehensive funding packages for transportation or education are usually voted upon only a handful of times in a single state legislative session. Moreover, when regional conflicts over education or transportation funding occur, deals are frequently hashed out in the backrooms of statehouses long before any roll-call vote is cast. By the time such bills are called for a vote by the entire legislative body, the vast majority of legislators have already agreed to get behind them. This stands in stark contrast to votes on an issue such as abortion, which many legislators are more than happy to vote upon frequently as a way of burnishing their in-district reputations as supporters of freedom of choice or protecting life (depending on the kind of district they come from).

If the explanation described above is true, then regional economic conflicts are alive and well inside the American states, but roll-call votes are the wrong places to look

for them. Examining such conflicts appropriately would likely entail engaging in a far more qualitative study in which interviews are utilized to learn about the process by which regional differences over funding issues get resolved behind closed doors. Such an inquiry would be very worthwhile, but it is also well beyond the scope of this project.

CONCLUSION

The first and foremost goal of Chapter Five has been to shed light on a key finding of Chapter Four, *viz* that the within-party ideological order of legislators from different geographical categories is remarkably similar across legislative chambers (particularly among Democratic caucuses). Through examining roll-call alignments on individual votes and linking them to geographical cleavages over substantive policy disputes, Chapter Five has sought to show in considerable detail what lies behind the sequences exhibited in Chapter Four. Here, I evaluate the extent to which Chapter Five has been successful in that regard.

First, the results of Chapter Five strongly suggest that the fact that Democratic legislators from rural or suburban categories consistently register more conservative mean ideal-point values than Democratic legislators from rural categories is *not* primarily related to disagreement over the bread-and-butter issues of state government. In particular, the chapter's results show that budget and tax policy issues tend to produce party-line votes rather than strong intra-party geographical alignments, and that regional disputes over the distribution of state budgets account for only a small percentage of geographical votes. Rather than being related to basic budgetary matters, roll-call votes

exhibiting a statistically significant urban-rural or core-periphery alignment are disproportionately concerned with hot-button issues such morality policy or gun control. It appears that these are the sorts of issues at the heart of the clearest split within most Democratic caucuses that was found in Chapter Four, that between legislators from the four urban categories and legislators from suburban or rural categories.

This observation is not sufficient for the purposes of explaining the patterns found in Figures 4.2 and 4.4, however. In addition to revealing the foregoing split, those figures show substantial differences *among* the urban categories as well. Specifically, they show that Democratic legislators from urban black districts and yuppie districts tend to be more liberal than Democratic legislators from urban Hispanic districts and urban ethnic matrix districts. The results of Chapter Five provide some indications of the policy issues that might be responsible for these differences. In particular, they show that roll-call votes that split legislators from urban black districts from most others are often related to social welfare policy and criminal justice policy, while roll-call votes that split yuppie legislators from most others are often related to environmental policy or morality policy. In sum, the translation of the geographical cleavages outlined at the beginning of Chapter Five into the legislative arena appears to have some influence on the ideological positions of legislators from different district categories that were described in Chapter Four.

These conclusions need to be accompanied by several caveats. To begin with, it is crucial to bear in mind that the roll-call votes upon which the analyses of Chapter Five were based are not the same as the ones upon which the analyses of Chapter Four were based. Whereas Chapter Four analyses relied upon datasets incorporating all roll-call

votes from 1999-2000 and 2011-2012 within the 17 legislative chambers, Chapter Five relied upon a much smaller number of politically-consequential roll-call votes from between 2006 and 2012, and for only three chambers. Given various constraints (most importantly, the fact that I am only one researcher and cannot possibly examine the policy content of the nearly 23,000 roll-call votes that were part of the analyses of Chapter Four), this was a necessary switch. It does, however, raise questions about whether highly distilled sets of roll-call votes such as were analyzed in Chapter Five can be legitimately used for the purpose of drawing conclusions about the full quantity of such votes, such as were analyzed in Chapter Four. It is possible, for example, that a policy-based analysis of voting alignments for the entire corpus of roll-call votes in the three chambers under examination in Chapter Five would reveal a much larger number of alignment patterns based upon a different set of policy issues. It is also possible that examining many of the fourteen additional chambers included in the dissertation would reveal more complex alignment patterns or different relationships between policy content and roll-call outcomes. It is furthermore necessary to keep in mind that, unlike the rest of the dissertation, the results of Chapter Five are based on data for a single (albeit rather long) time period. We do not know, therefore, how the changes in the geographical bases of state legislative parties that are the focus of much of the rest of the dissertation may have affected the tendency for different intra-party alignment patterns to emerge or even the basic relationships between policy content and roll-call alignments.

These are all important qualifications, and the extent to which the results of Chapter Five can be linked to those of Chapter Four is certainly curtailed because of

them. Still, the sorts of roll-call alignments found in Chapter Five resemble the overall patterns in roll-call ideology described in Chapter Four fairly closely. For example, the percentage of geographical roll-call votes in all three chambers exhibiting alignments in which Democratic legislators from small city and country and deep rural districts are arrayed against Democratic legislators from the urban district categories is quite high. Thus, it appears that the data used in Chapter Five point to the same basic legislative realities as those used in Chapter Four. Though we certainly cannot say that the alignment patterns in Chapter Five explain all of the intra-party variation in roll-call ideology found in Chapter Four, we can say with a reasonable degree of certainty that it explains a good deal of it.

The results of Chapter Five also suggest that, while the links between policy areas and alignment patterns that I specified at its beginning are real, the ways in which these links are expressed in contemporary state legislative politics are considerably more complex than the hypotheses suggest. A more complete account of the process by which policy areas evoke geographical cleavages which are then translated into the legislative arena would need to incorporate several additional factors I did not initially consider.

The first of these factors is the on-the-ground reality operating within individual states. As we have seen, particular circumstances in individual states are a key reason behind why certain alignment patterns emerge within some states and not others. For example, Illinois' enormous fiscal problems have been a central cause of the large number of votes exhibiting a racial alignment pattern in the Democratic caucus of the Illinois House, and the growing dominance of NoVa in Virginia politics is crucial to

understanding the large number of votes exhibiting a post-industrial alignment in the Virginia House. Circumstances such as these are often highly contextual and cannot be easily modeled. They are nonetheless essential if we are to get a clear picture of the way geographical cleavages manifest themselves in contemporary state politics.

Second, comprehensively understanding the link between policy areas and geographical conflict in state legislatures almost certainly entails going beyond quantitative studies of roll-call voting outcomes. Regional conflict over complicated policy areas such as education, health care, or transportation funding cannot be appropriately studied by exclusively examining the final votes that are cast in these areas. In order to understand the true nature of geographical conflict over these policies, it is necessary to peek into how the proverbial sausage is made rather than simply observing the final product.

Third, the results of the chapter suggest that the difference between the core-periphery cleavage and the urban-rural cleavage is scant at best. Contrary to my hypotheses, alignment patterns associated with these two cleavages emerged with respect to similar policy areas. In particular, both alignment patterns emerged among many roll-call votes concerning morality policy. On the other hand, gun control votes almost exclusively produced the core-periphery alignment pattern, suggesting that there may be something distinctive about these two patterns after all. On the whole, however, the results suggest that it may be best to consider the core-periphery and urban-rural cleavages as one and the same. Given that they together account for the vast majority of roll-call votes exhibiting statistically significant intra-party geographical alignments,

disentangling the difference between them (if any exists) is an important topic for future research.

Lastly, the findings clearly show that, while morality policy produces a very high number of geographical roll-call votes, the particular alignment patterns produced by morality policy votes are fairly multifarious. Urban-rural, core-periphery, and post-industrial alignments are all manifested fairly frequently in votes pertaining to morality policy. A fuller account of the relationship between policy areas and roll-call alignments would need to specify the conditions under which morality policy results in each of these particular alignments.

Chapter Six: The Geographical Sorting of State Legislative Party Bases: Causes, Consequences, and Implications

This dissertation has been motivated by two overarching goals: first, to develop a new approach to modeling the geographical constituency; second, to use that approach as a framework for understanding the evolution of state legislative politics over the past two decades. In this concluding chapter, I summarize the study's core findings and then proceed to examine several larger issues that emerge from a sweeping view of the study as a whole. First, I consider the significance of the dissertation's findings for political scientists' understanding of the relationship between legislators and their geographical constituencies. Second, I emphasize the profound importance of partisan change in two of the nine district categories – small city and country and deep rural districts – for the developments recounted in this dissertation, and suggest that the study's results underscore the need for political scientists to pay far greater attention to politics in America's "peripheral" (i.e., non-metropolitan) areas. Lastly, I examine the study's results within the context of an ominous trend that has garnered considerable attention in recent years – the growing divergence in policymaking between Democrat-controlled and Republican-controlled states.

CORE FINDINGS

In a manner that is perhaps unusual for most studies of political science, the first empirical chapter of this dissertation (Chapter Two) also served as an effort to exposit a framework to guide the rest of the project. Through a Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) of a

large amount of district-level demographic and geographical data, I unearthed nine latent categories of geographical constituencies represented by state legislators in the seventeen legislative chambers included in my study – urban black, urban Hispanic, urban ethnic matrix, yuppie, middle-class suburban, outer suburban, upscale suburban, small city and country, and deep rural. My analyses revealed that the nine-category solution fits the data very strongly and that each of the categories is fairly distinct in terms of the relevant demographic interactions that exist within it.

In Chapter Three of the dissertation, I examined changes in partisan representation among the nine district categories, with a focus on two distinct causes: demographic changes that alter the relative prevalence of the district categories inside state legislative chambers, and electoral changes that affect the tendency of district categories to be represented by Democrats and Republicans. My findings showed that demographic changes between 1990 and 2000 had the effect of substantially increasing the number of urban Hispanic, urban ethnic matrix, and upscale suburban districts among the chambers in my study, largely to the benefit of Democrats. But these changes paled in comparison to electoral developments, the most notable of which were strong increases in Republican representation among small city and country and deep rural districts. Republican ascendance in these two categories was particularly marked in the Rust Belt and Southern regions, areas where Republicans appear to have established fairly durable state legislative majorities. Thus, over the relatively short period of time in focus in this dissertation, political developments have outweighed demographic changes as influences on outcomes related to partisan representation and control in state legislatures.

Chapter Four deployed sophisticated ideal-point estimation procedures to examine how party and geographical constituency (expressed as the district categories) interact to affect the distribution of roll-call ideology in state legislative chambers. I found that, within party caucuses (especially Democratic Party caucuses), the order of legislators from each of the district categories in ideological space is highly consistent across legislative chambers. Across nearly all of the chambers in my sample, legislators from urban black or yuppie districts consistently held the most liberal positions and legislators from small city and country or deep rural districts consistently held the most conservative positions. In comparing my ideal-point results from 1999-2000 and 2011-2012, I found substantial evidence that most state legislative chambers had become more polarized and pointed to the large numerical decline of Democratic legislators from small city and country and deep rural districts between these two time periods as an important cause of increased polarization.

In Chapter Five, I sought to provide a fuller understanding of the ideological patterns uncovered in Chapter Four by investigating their policy-based origins. More specifically, I proposed and tested a series of hypotheses concerning the ways in which policy conflicts evoke particular geographical cleavages, which are then expressed as roll-call alignment patterns in state legislative chambers. Key findings of this chapter were that the core-periphery and urban-rural alignment patterns were especially common in state legislatures, and that cultural issues pertaining to morality policy and gun control were some of the most common topics of roll-call votes exhibiting statistically-significant intra-party geographical alignments. I also found less significant evidence that other types

of roll-call alignment patterns (in particular, racial and post-industrial alignment patterns) are present in certain legislative chambers and tend to emerge when particular policy issues are being voted upon.

MODELING THE GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCY: CONTRIBUTIONS AND LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

A key innovation of this dissertation has been its new approach to understanding and analyzing the geographical constituency. In the introductory chapter of the dissertation, I explained why such an approach is necessary and suggested that scholars should read my dissertation and then decide for themselves how valuable my efforts to develop it have been. Here, I make the final case for my efforts in this area, arguing that they represent an important step forward in the study of the constituency-legislator relationship and that they have yielded valuable new insights about state legislative politics. At the same time, I do not shy away from acknowledging problems with my model and research design and discuss possible ways in which future research projects might build upon the work I have done.

From a purely theoretical standpoint, the most important contribution of my study has been to exposit a way to model the geographical constituency that comes closer to approximating the reality of legislator perceptions. Because it incorporates a wide variety of demographic variables as well as some explicitly geographical ones, the LPA results in a categorization scheme that is reflective of legislative districts' socioeconomic milieus as well as their broader geographical locations. In this way, it marks an important step forward in the efforts of political scientists to more accurately represent how legislators

understand their geographical constituencies. While a significant gap surely remains between the LPA-based categorization scheme and the true nature of legislator perceptions, this gap is not quite as large as it once was.

All this would be for naught, however, if this new approach could not yield important and interesting insights about how the geographical constituency affects the conduct and course of state legislative politics (and, more broadly, of legislative politics in general). Thankfully, the analyses of this dissertation resulted in a large set of new or underappreciated findings in this regard. For example, few scholars have explicitly examined the question of how the interaction between demographic change and electoral change has affected the geographical bases of legislative parties, a research goal that the approach that was developed for this dissertation helped to facilitate. Additionally, no study has (to this author's knowledge) uncovered a systematic way of explaining variations in legislator roll-call ideology on the basis of constituency characteristics, something that the district categories were essential in revealing. Finally, whereas most studies of constituency influences have focused exclusively upon the extent to which social cleavages are expressed in legislative party bases, the approach that was developed in this dissertation enabled a detailed exploration of how different policy issues result in different geographically-based alignments *among legislators from the same party*. Each of these contributions was largely made possible by the approach to modeling the geographical constituency that is the basis of this dissertation.

Despite its virtues, the LPA-based research design at the heart of this dissertation is not perfect. Some of the problems with it owe primarily to issues of data availability

and reliability (discussed extensively in Chapter Two) that proved too cumbersome to rectify for this dissertation, but that should nonetheless be improved upon in similar future studies, should they occur. For example, the inability to include more state legislative chambers from the New England, Intermountain West, and Southern regions of the country does to some degree limit the generalizability of this study's results. Moreover, while I did make very substantial efforts to incorporate a wide array of demographic and geographical data into the LPA analysis (including using fairly intensive procedures to ensure comparability between 1990 and 2000 Census data), there is probably more than could be done in this area so as to add district-level variables related to economic sectors and religious adherence that were conspicuously absent from it.[54]

Perhaps more problematic than the absence of observations from additional chambers or more demographic variables within the LPA analysis is an inadequate amount of attention to the ways in which the contextual and geographical realities inside districts (those qualities that were modeled by the LPA) interact with other district characteristics that might affect legislative representation. For examples, district characteristics such as constituency size (Dahl and Tufte 1973; Mooney 1995; Bowen 2010), compactness (Pildes and Niemi 1993; Bowen 2010), and heterogeneity (Gerber and Lewis 2004) have been shown to impact legislative behavior in various ways. A truly

[54] One possibility that comes to mind is that emerging statistical procedures (most importantly, multi-level regression and post-stratification [MRP]) could be used to develop estimates of the religious compositions of state legislative districts (because the Census does not ask about religion, religious variables are conspicuously absent from the LPA).

comprehensive consideration of the geographical constituency would need to consider how legislators' understandings of their districts are mediated by these additional factors. Time and space considerations prevented me from examining these issues more fully, but in the future, I hope to be able to incorporate them into this research agenda.

THE NEGLECTED POLITICS OF "PERIPHERAL AMERICA"

A key finding of this dissertation, emphasized and re-emphasized at various points throughout the previous chapters, is that the single most consequential change affecting state legislative politics over the past twenty years has been the electoral realignment of small city and country districts and deep rural districts. While many other changes have affected a subset of state legislative chambers in the sample, the dramatic shift in partisan representation among these two district categories is a near-universal trend, likewise evident in the Mid-Atlantic and West Coast States as in the Central, Southern, and Rust Belt States in the sample.

The significance of the changes wrought by the gradual disappearance of Democratic legislators from small city and country and deep rural districts cannot be overstated. To begin with, it is this trend that, more than any other, has allowed Republicans to come to power in numerous state legislatures across the country. Lest any doubt about this proposition remain in the minds of readers, the results in Table 6.1 (next page) should dispel them. In it, the seventeen legislative chambers are ordered according to the percentage of small city and country and deep rural districts within them in the 2003-2012 period, with the right-hand column indicating partisan control of the chambers

in 2011-2012. As can be seen, there is a crystal-clear relationship between the prevalence of these two district categories within a state legislative chamber and whether that chamber was controlled by Democrats or Republicans at the end of the time period covered by this study. It appears that, once small city and country and deep rural districts constitute more than one-quarter of districts within a chamber, it becomes far more likely to be controlled by Republicans (at least in contemporary times). [55]

Table 6.1: The Prevalence of Small City and Country/Deep Rural Districts and Partisan Control in State Legislative Chambers, 2011-2012

	Percentage of Districts in Chamber that are Small City and Country or Deep Rural Districts, 2003-2012	Party in Control of Chamber in 2011-2012
Iowa House	55%	Republican
Alabama House	50%	Republican
Missouri House	42%	Republican
Wisconsin Assembly	42%	Republican
Indiana House	39%	Republican
Oregon House	39%	Split Control
Minnesota House	36%	Republican
Michigan House	32%	Republican
Ohio House	29%	Republican
Pennsylvania House	29%	Republican
Virginia House	27%	Republican
Washington House	22%	Democratic
Illinois House	19%	Democratic
New York Assembly	16%	Democratic
Nevada Assembly	12%	Democratic
California Assembly	5%	Democratic
New Jersey Assembly	0%	Democratic

[55] Of the chambers controlled by Republicans in 2011, the Minnesota House was the only chamber that switched to Democratic control in 2013 (after the 2012 elections). Additionally, the Oregon House (with a 30-30 tie in 2011-2012) was taken over by Democrats as well. All of the other chambers continue to be controlled by Republicans.

The effects of the electoral decline of Democrats from small city and country and deep rural districts have not been limited to changes in partisan control, however. As Chapter Four clearly demonstrated, the trend has also been responsible for large changes in ideological patterns *inside* state legislatures. In particular, gradual disappearance of Democratic legislators from small city and country and deep rural districts over the course of the 1990s and 2000s caused Democratic caucuses to lose their most conservative voices and consequently to become more ideologically homogeneous. But, as the colorful figures in Chapter Four reveal, while Democratic legislators from small city and country districts and deep rural districts have on average been *more* conservative than other Democrats, they have also been *far less* conservative than Republican legislators. While data limitations prevented me from directly testing the hypothesis that the Republicans who replaced Democrats as representatives of many small city and country and deep rural districts were far more conservative than their predecessors, circumstantial evidence strongly suggests this to be the case. Thus, a strong argument can be made that the fading away of Democratic legislators from small city and country and deep rural districts has substantially contributed to the polarization of state legislative parties.

Given its central role in altering the course of state legislative politics over the past twenty years, interpreting the phenomenon of partisan change among small city and country and deep rural districts is a matter of some importance. There are a variety of analytical perspectives through which this political development might be considered. For example, one can juxtapose it with the geographical scheme adopted by Richard

Bensel (1984, 1990, 2010) in his studies of American political-economic history. In Bensel's studies, focused largely on the late 19th century but extending all the way until the 1980s, Republicans are the party associated with the country's economically dynamic metropolitan zones and Democrats are the party associated with its agrarian hinterlands. When considered from this vantage point, the results of this study appear to show that the country's political geography has been flipped on its head. Today, it is Democrats who overwhelmingly represent the metropolis and Republicans who overwhelmingly represent the hinterlands in statehouses across every region of the country.

One can also consider partisan change in small city and country and deep rural districts by reference to a longstanding interpretation of contemporary American politics, fostered primarily by journalists and the non-academic political cognoscenti, about the role of morality policy and similar cultural issues in shaping contemporary American party conflict. Political commentators have for many years made assumptions about the influence of "sexy" issues such as abortion, gay marriage, or gun control on the political orientations of rural Americans. These assumptions appear to be shared by national Democratic leaders like Howard Dean, who famously bemoaned the success of Republicans in turning American politics into a struggle over "guns, God, and gays," and even by President Obama, who earned much unfavorable media attention when he observed in 2008 that small-town Pennsylvanians are "bitter" and consequently "cling to guns or religion" They have also been trumpeted by national Republican leaders like Rick Santorum, who, in reference to Obama's earlier comments, proudly shouted

"You're damn right, we [cling]!" to a raucous crowd of rural Pennsylvanians at a campaign rally in 2012.

The results of this study suggest that national politicians like Dean, Obama, and Santorum may not be the only ones who believe that rural and small-town Americans are disproportionately focused upon such issues. As we learned in Chapter Five, the remaining Democrats who represent small city and country and deep rural districts in state legislatures are more than happy to part company with their co-partisans from large metropolitan areas when roll-call votes over gun control, gay marriage, or school prayer are on the docket. Given the difficult electoral situations in which these legislators are likely to find themselves every two years, it is reasonable to assume they believe that voting against their party on these issues is crucial to their long-term political viability.

What is striking about the two foregoing interpretations of the phenomenon at hand is how little contemporary political science research has had to say about any of them. While a number of provocative studies have effectively evaluated elements of the claims made by Dean and Obama – in particular, their close resemblance to the well-known argument of historian/journalist Thomas Frank (2004) that "the white working class" has abandoned the Democratic Party over morality issues – these studies have almost exclusively done so by use of national survey data and by a focus on a small set of aspatial demographic variables, most notably race, income, and education.[56] In other words, the inherently contextual nature of electoral change that this dissertation has

[56] The most notable of these works have been an essay by Bartels (2006) and a reaction from Abramowitz and Teixeira (2008).

zeroed in on as essential to our understanding of developments in state legislative politics (and likely in other arenas as well) over the past twenty years has largely been ignored. Put another way, the key question that this dissertation suggests is critical for understanding contemporary American politics is not whether or how a decontextualized demographic category such as the "white working class" has abandoned the Democratic Party. Rather, it is why voters in particular places – more specifically, small cities and rural areas – have moved away from the Democratic Party (the question of *whether* these voters have moved away from the Democratic Party is just about settled; the results of Chapter Three, along with countless election returns, show fairly clearly that they have).

To be sure, a small number of political scientists have recognized what is missing in large-n studies of voting behavior that decontextualize individuals, and have thus begun to adopt research designs that seek to understand how individuals' political orientations are shaped by places, especially rural places. In a fascinating recent APSR article, Katherine Cramer Walsh (2012) uses ethnographic observations in rural communities in Wisconsin to argue that many rural Americans understand politics through a distinct place-based perspective that she terms "rural consciousness." This perspective, she contends, views "rural deprivation as the fault of (urban) political elites" and has caused rural Americans to support limited government, despite the fact that "such a stance might seem contradictory to their economic self-interest" (518). Importantly, in all of the political conversations that Walsh observes, she does not recall a single individual mentioning the subject of abortion, which to some extent belies the widespread stereotype that rural Americans are obsessed with morality issues.

Walsh's important contribution notwithstanding, there is still much work that needs to be done to better understand the political perspectives of rural Americans. For one thing, Walsh's study focuses on rural communities in one state, so the generalizability of her findings is unclear (as she herself concedes). Moreover, one wonders how Walsh's insights can be reconciled with the common view of the national media and the political class about the importance of morality and gun issues to rural Americans. While it is quite possible (perhaps even quite likely) that politicians like Obama, Santorum, and even state legislators are to some degree misguided in their understandings of rural America, the sheer ubiquity of their views suggests that they cannot be entirely off-base. Political scientists need to further explore how the perceptions of politically-induced deprivation about which Walsh writes become intertwined with views on cultural issues, thereby shaping the overall political orientations of those who live in America's hinterlands.

MICROGEOGRAPHICAL CLEAVAGES AND THE NATIONALIZATION OF STATE LEGISLATIVE CONFLICT

Since 2010, when divided government returned to Washington, D.C., the national government has not produced a single major policy achievement. Efforts to legislate large policy reforms in such areas as immigration, economic development, entitlement reform, and climate change have repeatedly failed, victims of the intense partisan gridlock that has become a defining feature of national politics. This seemingly perpetual paralysis stands in marked contrast to events taking place in statehouses across the country, where governors and legislatures have been implementing unusually ambitious

policy programs. What is particularly interesting about contemporary state policymaking, however, is the extent to which states controlled by Democrats and states controlled by Republicans have been moving in opposite directions. Over the past three years, Republican-controlled states have regularly slashed income tax rates, passed controversial abortion restrictions, adopted punitive illegal immigration measures, expanded school voucher programs, cut unemployment benefits, eliminated collective bargaining rights for public employees, and implemented strict voter identification laws, to name just a few important examples. For their part, Democrat-controlled states have (among others things) sharply raised income tax rates, created greenhouse gas cap-and-trade regimes, legalized gay marriage, abolished capital punishment, given undocumented immigrants in-state higher education benefits, and passed laws making it easier for people to vote.

The stark differences between the policies of Democrat-controlled and Republican-controlled states is a new phenomenon in state politics, where the relationship between party control and policy output has historically been much weaker than in the national political arena (Erickson, Wright, and McIver 1989). Perhaps because it can be easily linked to the famous "red state-blue state" divide that has become a mainstay of presidential election interpretations, the trend has caught the attention of many national political commentators.[57] When considered in unison, the collective message of these columnists is that "red-state America" and "blue-state America" are no

[57] A few good examples include Brownstein and Bland 2011, Keller 2013, McLaughlin 2013, Jacobson 2013, and Gerken 2013.

longer merely useful shorthand ways of describing the geography of national electoral politics. Rather, they have become valuable terms for describing the increasingly distinct bundles of policies that different states are enacting.

The growing policy divergence between "red states" and "blue states" is an intriguing trend to consider in light of what this dissertation has had to say about state legislative politics. To begin with, given this dissertation's claim that sub-state geographical cleavages are a driving force behind American politics at all levels, some may wonder why the difference in productivity between Congress and state legislatures exists at all? After all, if sub-state geographical cleavages are acting upon each, the net result in each should be the same. But though the geographical divisions that were examined in this study exist at the sub-state level, no state exhibits a political topography as complex as that of the entire country. While numerous states have claimed at various points to be "microcosms of the country" in terms of their social or geographical profiles, the reality is that, in spite of all the internal diversity described in this dissertation, every state is quite a bit more homogenous than the country as a whole.[58]

[58] There are many additional reasons for why gridlock has become commonplace in the national government but not in the states. Perhaps most importantly, the unique institutional arrangements of the federal government (i.e., a malapportioned U.S. Senate, long and staggered terms for Senators, the filibuster, etc.) are not fully replicated in any state. Their combined effect is to make it far more difficult to garner the majorities necessary to pass comprehensive laws at the federal level than at the state level. It also seems likely that because the states, unlike the federal government, have balanced-budget requirements, it is much more difficult for them to kick the proverbial can down the road amidst difficult fiscal circumstances. Thus, state budget problems inevitably lead to difficult and controversial political decisions, which is not the case with the federal government.

Far from being inconsistent with the new red-blue divide in state policymaking, the results of this dissertation point toward a fairly important reason for why this divide has only emerged in recent years, over a decade after the red-blue divide in presidential elections first gained attention. Until recently, partisan representation in state legislatures did not align perfectly with the dominant geographical cleavages of national politics. Historical traditions of party allegiance, particularly in the South and in non-metropolitan areas, had managed to persist in state elections such that state-level partisan divisions did not neatly coincide with national ones.[59] As this study has shown, such historical allegiances have eroded substantially over the past twelve years. In many ways, the 2010 elections marked the end of a long period in which state party systems enjoyed considerable autonomy from national politics. Today, the geographical alignments that define the politics of most states are largely the same as those that define the politics of the entire country.

While the nationalization of state party cleavages is surely not the only factor that has influenced the policy divergence of Republican-controlled and Democrat-controlled states, it is almost certainly an important part of the story. This is the case for two reasons, the first of which is that it has caused the geographical bases of state legislative parties to more closely resemble those of the congressional parties. Being in charge of caucuses whose members hail from constituencies that support the goals of their national parties has given state legislative party leaders a far greater incentive to pursue an

[59] Gimpel (1996) provides an excellent (if quite dated) examination of what he calls "electoral incongruence" between state and national party systems.

unapologetically national agenda. After all, doing so no longer puts vulnerable members whose districts are increasingly voting for the other party in national elections in much risk.

Moreover, anecdotal evidence suggests that incoming Republican state legislators who defeat longtime incumbents in historically-Democratic small city and country and deep rural districts often arrive at statehouses with distinctly national agendas. A cursory examination of state legislative campaigns in which such legislators were elected reveals a fairly regular pattern in which the struggling Democratic incumbent engages in a futile attempt to distinguish between developments in Washington, D.C., and his work for the district in the state capital, while the Republican challenger incessantly discusses national issues, national political developments, and national political figures, as if he were running for the U.S. Congress instead of the state legislature. While the rhetoric employed by both candidates is obviously part of a campaign strategy, it is reasonable to believe that the successful, nationally-oriented campaign that the Republican challenger has run plays a significant role in shaping the decisions he makes, the alliances he forms, and the issues he promotes once he becomes a state legislator.

These developments point to a fascinating paradox that has not yet received scholarly attention. On the one hand, there is little doubt that American party politics has become more nationalized, as the microgeographical cleavages that define national politics have permeated state politics and state party systems have consequently lost the autonomy they once enjoyed. But on the other hand, the ever-present dysfunction in the federal government, coupled with the infusion of partisan ideology into state politics, has

redounded in a situation in which states have become the primary venues in which controversial national policy is made. To a significant degree, therefore, state politics in the second decade of the 21st century *is* national politics.

Whether this new trend endures remains to be seen. If history is any guide, the national government will eventually get its act together and enact comprehensive policies to address pressing national problems. But one cannot dismiss the possibility that the national government will remain paralyzed, that the states will continue to make national policy in its place, and that the policies enacted by the states will continue to diverge. Two things seem relatively certain, however. First, whatever happens will have its roots in the geographical bases of the American political parties. Second, any consequential changes to the geography of the American party system will take place, at least in part, at the microgeographical level. Thus, as we watch the future of state and national politics unfold, it behooves us to be mindful of what is happening *inside* states in addition to what is happening across them.

Appendix One: A Brief Overview of Latent Profile Analysis

Latent profile analysis (LPA) is a model-based approach to cluster analysis, in which an unobserved (or latent) categorical variable is assumed to account for covariations among a large number of observed (or manifest) continuous variables. LPA is closely related to Latent Class Analysis (LCA), wherein the observed variables are categorical instead of continuous. Both LPA and LCA belong to a set of modeling techniques known as "finite mixture models" (Muthen 2001; Pastor et al. 2007; Masyn 2013). The key feature of finite mixture models is that the distributions of one or more observed variables are understood to be constituted of a mixture of unobserved component distributions (Muthen 2001; Masyn 2013). To say that the components are unobserved is to signify that their "number, proportion, and form" are not known (Masyn 2013, 552). The goal of finite mixture models, therefore, is to estimate these properties of the components.

To use the example motivating this dissertation, when a researcher considers the distributions of various politically-relevant demographic variables across political jurisdictions, he might want to bring into his analysis the knowledge that the jurisdictions are located in distinct types of places, and that some of these types of places tend to have very different distributions of the demographic variables than others. These types of places are *unobserved* or *latent* because the researcher does not have direct data concerning how many types of places there are, which types are more or less common, or precisely how each type of place is distinguishable from the others. Finite mixture

modeling (and, in this particular case, latent profile analysis) provides the researcher with a way of estimating each of these aspects of the various place types.

In psychology, a field in which finite mixture modeling is commonly employed, it is sometimes said that finite mixture modeling is a "person-centered approach" to latent variable modeling while factor analytic modeling is a "variable-centered approach" to latent variable modeling (Marsh et al. 2009). The distinction between these two approaches is that person-centered approaches are "predicated on the assumption that the population is heterogeneous with respect to the relationships between variables," and thus seek to explain such heterogeneity through the development of person-centered categories, while variable-centered approaches "are predicated on the assumption that the population is homogeneous with respect to variable relationships," and thus seek to explain relationships among variables through the development of variable-centered factors (Masyn 2013, 553). To be sure, this basic distinction is not especially significant from a data analysis perspective, since person-centered categories can usually be represented via variable-centered factors, and vice versa (Horn 2000; Masyn 2013). Nonetheless, choosing the right approach is important because studies are on firmer ground in terms of the testing of hypotheses and interpretations of results when the methodological techniques that are selected are conceptually appropriate.

In the LPA analysis of this project, the observations are not persons but rather geographical entities. Thus, the conceptual distinction referenced by psychologists can be slightly altered to distinguish between "entity-centered approaches" and "variable-centered approaches." It is clear, however, that the conceptually appropriate latent

modeling approach is the finite mixture model rather than the factor analytic model. This is because the fundamental goal of the analysis is to explain heterogeneity in the relationships between variables among the observations in my sample (i.e., the 3,504 legislative districts) rather than to simplify the set of variables for which I have collected data.

The formal specification of the LPA model has been detailed in many other works (see, e.g., Muthen 2001) and need not detain us here. Several important aspects of the LPA model and its estimation are worth noting, however. First, as discussed above and in Chapter Two, LPA is a model-based approach to quantitative categorization. In LPA (as in other finite mixture models), there are actually two components to the model that is estimated: a *measurement model* that expresses the relationships between the observed variables and the latent variable (i.e., the distributions of observed variables for each latent category), and a *structural model* indicating the proportions of each latent category (Masyn 2013). While each latent category is estimated using the same model, the parameters expressing the relationships between observed variables and endorsement of a particular category take on different values (Muthen 2001). In more complicated forms of finite mixture modeling, individual latent categories can be estimated using different models, but such an approach was not attempted in this study.

Additionally, as discussed in Chapter Two, LPA in its classical form is premised on the notion that the latent variable accounts for all of the associations between the observed variables, an assumption known as conditional independence (Muthen 2001). In other words, it is assumed that there are no systematic relationships between any of the

observed variables within the categories that emerge from the LPA. While researchers can relax this assumption and should do so under particular circumstances, this is not generally recommended (Marsh et al. 2009). In this study, I have chosen to maintain the conditional independence assumption.

Finally, LPA is estimated by an iterative maximum-likelihood estimation procedure using the Expectation-Maximization (EM) algorithm (Muthen 2001; Vermunt and Magidson 2002; Pastor 2007; Masyn 2013). Different sets of model parameters estimates are considered and the ones that yield the largest log-likelihood value are chosen. Because of the problem of local maxima (i.e., the range of log-likelihood values may have local peaks that are lower than the highest peak), it is recommended that scholars employ multiple random starting values. In testing different class solutions, I employed 1000 multiple random starting values and ten iterations. Additionally, I reproduced the final (nine-class) solution upon which I settled using 1000 random starting values and 20 iterations in order to ensure reliability.

Appendix Two: Supplementary Information on Data Collection for Latent Profile Analysis

Prior to conducting the Latent Profile Analysis (LPA) of 3,504 state legislative districts in the 1990s and 2000s, a large number of technical decisions needed to be made regarding the estimation of raw data for state legislative districts in the 1990s, the adjustment of data to ensure comparability across Censuses, and the calculation of the METRO variable. In the interest of full disclosure, I provide this appendix, which includes some additional information about various aspects of the data collection process.

Ascertaining the Reliability of Demographic Estimates Produced by Spatial Joining

Chapter Two provided basic details about the spatial joining procedures used to estimate demographic data for 1993-2002 state legislative districts. While it is difficult to precisely know the accuracy of the estimates produced by this procedure, several inspections suggest that the estimates are generally quite reliable. To begin with, final data on the percentage of black and Hispanic residents were compared with data from Lilley, DeFranco, and Bernstein (1998), who wrote the premiere reference manual on state legislative districts in the 1990s. The comparison reveals that my estimates align closely with theirs.

Another way of checking the reliability of the spatial joining procedure is by comparing the estimates of total population of each legislative district in a legislative chamber. Given that legislative districts in a single chamber have roughly equal populations, the process of aggregating population data from Census block group

centroids to the legislative districts that geographically encompass them should result in district population estimates that are fairly similar. If the spatial joining procedure is found to yield within-chamber district population estimates that vary widely, this would constitute evidence that the process of aggregating data from centroid to district is not producing reliable estimates.

Table A2.1 (next page) presents data on 1990s district population estimates generated by the spatial joining procedure for each of the seventeen chambers in the sample. In particular, the second, third, and fourth columns present the mean district population, the standard deviation (sd), and the coefficient of variation (cv) for each chamber. As can be seen, the coefficients of variation are generally quite low, suggesting that the spatial joining procedure has yielded fairly reliable estimates. It is important to point out that the U.S. Supreme Court has permitted small levels of population inequality across districts in state legislative redistricting plans (Levitt 2010), so the variation that does exist in the within-chamber population estimates is not entirely due to estimation error. At the same time, one also notices that the coefficients of variation are clearly smaller among the chambers whose districts have larger populations (e.g., the California Assembly, New Jersey Assembly, and New York Assembly) and larger among the chambers whose districts have smaller populations (e.g., the Minnesota House, Missouri House, and Nevada Assembly). Thus, it appears that the decision not to include legislative chambers with districts having populations of less than 25,000 was quite appropriate.

Table A2.1: Descriptive Statistics on Spatial Joining Estimates of Total Population for 1993-2002 State Legislative Districts

	District Population – Spatial Joining Estimates			District Population – 1990 State Population Divided by Number of Districts
	mean	sd	cv	
Alabama House	38563	2938	0.076	38482
California Assembly	371789	2808	0.008	372000
Iowa House	27767	2058	0.074	27768
Illinois House	96999	3081	0.032	96870
Indiana House	55447	2730	0.049	55442
Michigan House	84505	4216	0.050	84503
Minnesota House	32660	2417	0.074	32650
Missouri House	31405	2256	0.072	31393
Nevada Assembly	28774	3574	0.124	28615
New Jersey Assembly	193490	3110	0.016	193255
New York Assembly	120040	4473	0.037	119936
Ohio House	109607	4403	0.040	109567
Oregon House	47397	2079	0.044	47372
Pennsylvania House	58596	1708	0.029	58530
Virginia House	61560	4332	0.070	61874
Washington House	98355	3992	0.041	99320
Wisconsin Assembly	49415	3490	0.071	49412

Finally, the last (fifth) column of the table shows the 1990 district population for each chamber as calculated by dividing the 1990 state population by the number of districts in the chamber. As can be seen, the results for this column are very similar to those of the first column (mean district population calculated by the spatial joining procedure). This provides further evidence that the spatial joining procedure is effective in estimating data at the state legislative district level.

ENSURING DATA COMPARABILITY

Of the twelve observed variables incorporated into the LPA, eleven were calculated directly from Census data. Nine of the variables calculated from Census data were confirmed to be perfectly comparable across Censuses. These nine variables were HISP, UNDER18, OVER65, MAR, ENG, FAM, BA, PRIVSEC, SELFEMP. For the most part, the comparability of these variables is self-evident (it is hard to change how to measure the percentage of people under age 18), but for FAM, see Ruggles and Brower 2003; for PRIVSEC and SELFEMP, see U.S. Census Bureau 2005.

In the case of BLACK (percentage of people who are Black/African-American within a legislative district), comparability was slightly complicated because of the option of selecting more than one race in the 2000 Census, but not in the 1990 Census. The percentage of Americans who opted to select more than one race in the 2000 Census was quite small, however. For 2003-2012 state legislative districts, BLACK is calculated as the percentage who choose "Black/African-American" to describe themselves, either as their only selection or as one among others.

The variable URBAN posed the most significant problems in terms of ensuring comparability due to highly technical changes in the standards used by the U.S. Census Bureau to determine whether places should be considered urban or rural between 1990 and 2000. Stated very succinctly, these changes were largely based on the introduction of the "urban cluster" concept, designed to capture densely-populated clusters of under 50,000 people and include them as a type of urban area, as well as the decision to adopt a purely density-based approach to measuring urbanity (i.e., without taking jurisdictional

boundaries into account) (Ratliffe 2006). On the whole, these changes affected urban/rural delineation among an extremely small percentage of the U.S. population. Due to differences in laws governing municipal incorporation and other factors, however, some states were far more affected than others.

To remedy potential measurement errors caused by this problem, I obtained a data file (graciously provided by Michael Ratliffe of the U.S. Census Bureau) that applied Census 2000 urban area criteria to Census 1990 data at the county level. These data include the exact number of people within each county of the U.S. who are reclassified from rural to urban (or, in some cases, from urban to rural) when 2000 Census criteria are used to classify 1990 observations instead of 1990 criteria. The county level is the smallest areal unit for which such data were available. Using ArcGIS spatial joining techniques, I associated counties with 1993-2002 state legislative districts in each of my seventeen chambers and estimated the percentage of the population of each state legislative district that lives in a given county. I then developed a measure of the urban/rural reclassifications of state legislative districts on the basis of county data. For example, if 95% of residents of state legislative district A lived in County 1, whose urban population increased by 3% using 2000 Census criteria, and the other 5% lived in County 2, whose urban population increased by 1%, then the urban population change for the district was estimated as: (.95*.03) + (.05*.01) = .029, or 2.9%. Thus, 2.9% was added to state legislative district A's 1990 urban population. In this way, the data for all 1990 state legislative districts on URBAN were adjusted to comport with 2000 Census criteria.

Thus, data on URBAN for all 3,504 districts in my dataset were based on the same (Census 2000) criteria.

CALCULATING THE METRO VARIABLE

The final variable included in the LPA was the district metropolitanization index (METRO). Unlike the eleven other observed variables, METRO was calculated not from individual-level Census data but instead from the OMB's 2003 Urban-Rural Continuum Codes, which classify counties according to their association with metropolitan areas. As discussed in Chapter Two, the OMB's urban-rural continuum codes are fundamentally distinct from the data used to create the URBAN variable, in part because they are based on the principle of "rural integration" instead of "rural separation" (Isserman 2005). OMB codes range from 1 ("Counties in metro areas with 1 million population or more') to 9 ("Completely rural or less than 2,500 urban population, not adjacent to metro area").[60]

In an ideal world, 1993 OMB urban-rural continuum codes would have been used to measure METRO for 1993-2002 state legislative districts and 2003 OMB codes would have been used to measure METRO for 2003-2012 districts. Unfortunately, the standards by which OMB calculated its continuum codes changed substantially between decades, rendering the use of codes from separate decades problematic. Because continuum code measurement is based on highly intricate data (i.e., transportation and employment

[60] To learn more about the 2003 OMB codes, go to: http://webarchives.cdlib.org/sw1wp9v27r/http:/ers.usda.gov/Briefing/Rurality/RuralUrbCon/

patterns, etc.), no reasonable conversion factors or adjustment techniques exist to align 1993 codes with 2003 codes. However, it is crucial to bear in mind that the correlation between 1993 and 2003 codes is a very high 0.84. Thus, even with the changes in continuum code measurements, counties are grouped into largely the same categories across decades. It was therefore decided that little violence would be done to the data by applying 2003 codes to 1993-2002 state legislative districts.

Because the chief value of the OMB codes for my dissertation lies in measuring metropolitanization, not urban/rural populations (which are already included in my LPA via URBAN), I recoded all of the non-metro codes in the OMB scheme into a single, non-metropolitan category. The recoded categories were given values ranging from 100 (metro, greater than 1,000,000) to 0 (non-metro). As with URBAN, I next used ArcGIS spatial joining techniques to associate county populations with state legislative districts and developed a summary measure of the metropolitanization of a state legislative district on the basis of county data. For example, if 95% of residents of state legislative district A lived in County 1, located in a metro area of greater than 1,000,000, and the other 5% lived in County 2, located in a non-metro area, then the metropolitanization index value of the state legislative district was calculated as (.95 * 100) + (.05 * 0) = 95. Conversely, if a state legislative district was composed of five non-metro counties, each composing 20% of the district's population, the metropolitanization index value for it was calculated as (0 * .2) + (0 * .2) + (0 * .2) + (0 * .2) + (0 * .2) = 0. In this way, state legislative district metropolitanization index scores were tabulated to range from 0 to 100.

Appendix Three: Testing the Robustness of the Nine-Category Latent Profile Analysis Solution

Here, I address concerns about whether (and to what extent) the classification scheme that emerged from the LPA would be reproduced if the sample of legislative districts or modeling instructions were somewhat different. First, if the sample of districts were split by decade and 1990s and 2000s districts were modeled separately, would the same set of district categories emerge? Given demographic changes that occurred between 1990 and 2000, the distribution of observed values for the 1990s and 2000s districts is certainly not the same. It is therefore reasonable to expect slightly different solutions for LPA analyses based on districts from only one decade. However, a key premise of this dissertation is that the nine district categories represent distinct geographical contexts that existed throughout both decades. Thus, if splitting the sample results in two classification schemes that differ markedly, the validity of the study is (to some extent) called into question.

To consider this question, I ran separate nine-class models for the 1,752 districts from the 1990s and for the 1,752 districts from the 2000s. Examining the data, I found that categories with the same essential features were produced, though with slight (and expected) differences in parametric estimations and mean values for the observed variables. A fairly simple and straightforward way to compare the solutions that emerged from the split-sample LPA models and the model used for the dissertation is to cross-tabulate the categorical classifications of the districts from the 1990s-only and 2000s-only LPAs with their classifications in the pooled model. The two tables below present

these cross-tabulations, with the top table exhibiting results for the 1990s districts and the bottom table exhibiting results for the 2000s districts. In both tables, the rows are the classifications from the pooled sample that was used from the dissertation and the columns are the classifications for the split-sample LPAs. The categories for the split-sample models were given the same names (based on their profiles) as the categories in the pooled model.

Table A3.1: Cross-Tabulation of Pooled Model Classifications by Split-Sample Model Classifications, 1990s Districts

	Urban Black	Urban Hispanic	Urban Ethnic Matrix	Yuppie	Middle-Class Suburbs	Outer Suburbs	Upscale Suburbs	Small City and Country	Deep Rural
Urban Black	150	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Urban Hispanic	0	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Urban Ethnic Matrix	0	2	80	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yuppie	0	0	0	61	0	0	0	0	0
Middle-Class Suburbs	0	0	6	3	375	0	4	0	0
Outer Suburbs	0	0	6	0	9	281	11	0	0
Upscale Suburbs	0	0	3	1	0	0	131	0	0
Small City and Country	0	0	1	0	4	5	0	441	0
Deep Rural	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	118

Note: Rows = Classification of 1990s districts Based on Pooled LPA (Used in Dissertation); Columns = Classification of 1990s districts Based on LPA Run Exclusively with 1990s Districts.

Table A3.2: Cross-Tabulation of Pooled Model Classifications by Split-Sample Model Classifications, 2000s Districts

	Urban Black	Urban Hispanic	Urban Ethnic Matrix	Yuppie	Middle-Class Suburbs	Outer Suburbs	Upscale Suburbs	Small City and Country	Deep Rural
Urban Black	146	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
Urban Hispanic	0	56	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Urban Ethnic Matrix	0	0	148	0	3	0	2	0	0
Yuppie	1	0	1	49	6	0	2	0	0
Middle-Class Suburbs	0	0	0	0	332	2	0	9	0
Outer Suburbs	0	0	0	0	0	236	0	12	0
Upscale Suburbs	0	0	0	0	13	17	166	1	0
Small City and Country	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	385	78
Deep Rural	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	82

Note: Rows = Classification of 2000s districts Based on Pooled LPA (Used in Dissertation); Columns = Classification of 2000s districts Based on LPA Run Exclusively with 1990s Districts.

As can be seen, the overwhelming majority of observations fall along the diagonal lines in both tables. These, of course, are the observations that were classified similarly in both the split-sample and pooled-sample models. There is only one significant discrepancy, which can be seen at the bottom-right corner of the Table A1.2. Many 2000s districts that were classified within the small city and country category in the pooled model are classified within the deep rural category in the pooled model. This can be explained as a result of the fact that 2000s legislative districts exhibit higher values for the percent-urban and metropolitanization variables than do the 1990s legislative districts. Consequently, the parametric estimations for these two variables for the deep rural category are larger in the 2000s-only model than in the pooled model, yielding a higher cut-off for districts to be placed in this category. Besides this discrepancy,

however, the classifications of the 1990s-only and 2000s-only models are nearly identical to those of the pooled model. Thus, across all three models, the profiles of the nine categories that emerge are largely the same.

A similar concern about the robustness of the LPA model used in this dissertation has to do with the effect of including districts from legislative chambers of different sizes. This issue is discussed in some detail in Chapter 2, where I justify my use of an LPA model that treats all districts in the sample equally, irrespective of the chamber to which they belong. While an unweighted LPA model is in my view the best approach to the research question of this dissertation, it is nonetheless worthwhile to consider whether the classification scheme that emerged from the LPA model that was used in this study would be different if observations were weighted based on their chamber. To this end, I ran a nine-category LPA model in which the 3,504 districts were weighted by chamber such that all seventeen chambers were equally represented in the sample (i.e., districts from chambers with a larger-than-average number of districts were weighted down and districts from chambers with a lower-than-average number of districts were weighted up). Table A3.3 (below) presents the cross-tabulation of district classification for the unweighted model used in the dissertation (rows) by the weighted model (columns). As can be seen, the classifications of the unweighted and weighted models are nearly identical. Thus, using a weighted LPA model to classify the districts in the sample into nine categories would not have changed the resulting classification scheme much, if at all.

Table A3.3: Cross-Tabulation of Unweighted Pooled Model Classifications by Weighted Pooled Model Classifications

	Urban Black	Urban Hispanic	Urban Ethnic Matrix	Yuppie	Middle-Class Suburbs	Outer Suburbs	Upscale Suburbs	Small City and Country	Deep Rural
Urban Black	301	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Urban Hispanic	0	90	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Urban Ethnic Matrix	0	0	220	6	3	0	6	0	0
Yuppie	0	0	0	120	0	0	0	0	0
Middle-Class Suburbs	0	0	1	7	698	15	7	3	0
Outer Suburbs	0	0	0	0	0	553	2	0	0
Upscale Suburbs	0	0	0	1	1	1	328	1	0
Small City and Country	2	0	0	0	1	9	0	896	6
Deep Rural	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	224

Note: Rows = Classification of 1990s and 2000s districts Based on Unweighted Pooled LPA (Used in Dissertation);
Columns = Classification of 1990s and 2000s districts Based on LPA, Weighted By Chamber.

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